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NARRATIVE THEORY AND FORT BERTHOLD'S
STORIES OF THE PARANORMAL OR SUPERNATURAL

by

Waylon C. Baker
Bachelor of Science, North Dakota State University, 2002
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A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty

of the

University of North Dakota

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

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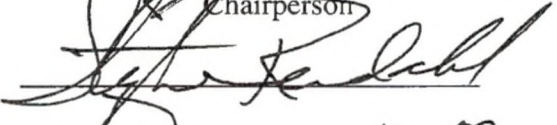
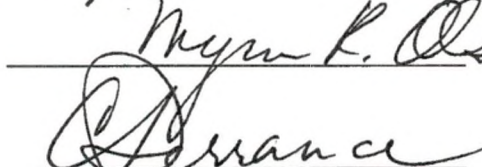
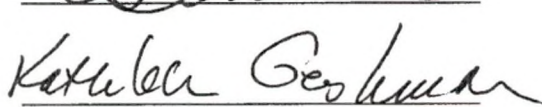
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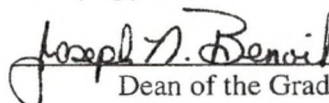


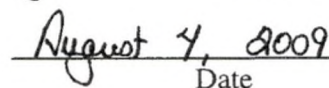
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This dissertation meets the standards for appearance, conforms to the style and format requirements of the Graduate School of the University of North Dakota, and is hereby approved.


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ABSTRACT

The author collected stories of the paranormal and supernatural from 10 enrolled members of the Three Affiliated Tribes of Fort Berthold, North Dakota. The research participants were members of the Mandan, Hidatsa, and Arikara tribes.

Five research questions guided the study:

Where did these contemporary stories of the paranormal or supernatural originate?

What is the meaning behind these stories?

How are these stories different from other stories of the paranormal or supernatural?

Do the respondents "believe" in these stories of the paranormal?

Do these stories connect to traditional American Indian customs and beliefs?

The content of the stories fell into several categories: the Little People, Hoffman, Bigfoot, and a miscellaneous grouping. Three concepts guided the interpretation of the stories: the American Indian oral tradition, Walter Fisher's narrative paradigm, and the paranormal or supernatural.

The American Indian oral tradition was revealed in the way the stories were told, complete with the use of sometimes sacred language and nonverbal communication. Fisher's concepts of fidelity and coherence were present in the storytelling through the use of culturally believable details and enough focus to show a central meaning for each story. The paranormal or supernatural were revealed in characterizations of the Little

People, sometimes as witches; Bigfoot as a nine-foot spiritual being and; Hoffman as a fantastical human figure with hooved feet. Houses which were lit up and filled with life turn out to be derelict and abandoned upon revisiting.

Five themes emerged from this qualitative study:

Theme one: Research participants believe in these stories and experiences because of their values, traditions, and language.

Theme two: Research participants believe in the stories and experiences because they come from family and elders.

Theme three: These stories and experiences originated from tribal beliefs.

Theme four: Research participants consider these stories spiritual rather than supernatural or paranormal.

Theme five: Research participants consider many of these stories as warnings or taboo.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The Three Affiliated Tribes located in western North Dakota have relied on stories to preserve their culture, teach younger generations valuable lessons, and warn others of taboos or dangers. Traditional stories of the Mandan, Hidatsa, and Arikara have been collected for centuries. However, there has been virtually no research devoted to contemporary stories of the paranormal or supernatural as told by members of the Three Affiliated Tribes. Through this study, we may begin to understand the importance of these contemporary stories and their origins. The indigenous people of western North Dakota have created a rich contemporary oral tradition, and it deserves to be documented. This was achieved by asking enrolled members of the Three Affiliated Tribes to share their versions of contemporary stories of the paranormal or supernatural about Fort Berthold.

Three categories of stories of the paranormal or supernatural that pertain to Fort Berthold were chosen for this particular study. These stories include the Little People, Hoofman stories, and Bigfoot. Hoofman was chosen because the researcher learned that Hoofman is Fort Berthold's version of the popular "Deer Woman" stories. As reported by the *Mandan, Hidatsa, and Arikara Times* and the *Bismarck Tribune*, Bigfoot was supposedly seen by numerous eyewitnesses on Fort Berthold. Finally, the Little People are very well-known by most members of the Three Affiliated Tribes. The researcher chose to ask for any paranormal or supernatural stories that dealt with Fort Berthold in

addition to these three well-known categories of stories of the paranormal or supernatural.

The researcher struggled to classify these stories as either paranormal or supernatural. Most members of the Three Affiliated Tribes consider these stories as “spook” stories. “Researchers have frequently used the terms paranormal and supernatural interchangeably in the empirical literature” (Beck & Miller, 2001, p. 1). Regardless, some factor analytic studies (Grimmer & White, 1990; Haraldsson & Houtkooper, 1996; Johnson, de Groot, & Spanos, 1995) that pertain to the differentiation between paranormal and supernatural beliefs have established that some individuals do distinguish between paranormal beliefs like extra-sensory perception and supernatural phenomena associated with religion like angels and miracles. The researcher decided to be inclusive and incorporate both the paranormal and supernatural to explain these stories told by members of the Three Affiliated Tribes.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this particular narrative study was to discover where these stories and experiences originated and their meaning. It is also important to learn how these stories differ from other stories of the paranormal or supernatural, and how they connect to traditional American Indian customs, beliefs, and values. Finally, the researcher wanted to learn if the respondents believe in these stories of the paranormal or supernatural. We live in a world of empiricism, skepticism, and “intellectual barbarianism.” This is especially prevalent in Academe, where ontological certainties are based on what we can see with our own eyes (Berger & Luckman, 1966). Walter Fisher, the forefather of narrative theory, dared to assert that “human beings are storytelling

beings” and that reality can be a cultural construct achieved through storytelling” (1978, 1984, 1987).

The researcher attempted to demonstrate that storytelling is a valid means of understanding a culture’s belief systems, even if the stories are beyond the realm of mainstream beliefs about reality. Cultures throughout the world have told numerous tales of sea serpents, Little People, dragons, ghosts, demons, and other paranormal or supernatural phenomena. However, these were not always considered to be outside the realm of existential reality. “Rational” people once believed the world was flat, that fairies and leprechauns danced on mounds, and that there was a world beyond this one. Fisher’s narrative theory was instrumental in understanding how a community can share beliefs based on stories (Wood, 2000).

Research Questions

1. Where did these contemporary stories of the paranormal originate?
2. What is the meaning behind these stories?
3. How are these stories different from other stories of the paranormal?
4. Do the respondents “believe” in these stories of the paranormal?
5. Do these stories connect to traditional American Indian customs and beliefs?

Significance of the Study

Explorers, missionaries, even occasionally captives of American Indians, usually had something to say about American Indian oratory. Even today, linguists and ethnographers continue to discuss the eloquence of the American Indian (Clements, 2002). However, there is little research in the area of contemporary American Indian storytelling. Paranormal and supernatural belief systems have been carefully studied by

social scientists, but researchers have failed to notice the strong significance of contemporary paranormal or supernatural beliefs among American Indians. Many members of the Three Affiliated Tribes do not consider these experiences and stories urban legends or mere superstitions. These stories and experiences influence many lives on Fort Berthold. They also offer brief but significant glimpses into the customs, beliefs, and traditions of the Mandan, Hidatsa, and Arikara.

Need for the Study

American Indian oral traditions are a rich resource for communication scholars. American Indian tribes have relied upon the spoken word rather than the letter. Without a written language, American Indians had to rely on an oral tradition to pass on stories and histories. "Indian stories, including myths, endured for generations by continually being reconfigured. These retellings resulted in slow, careful refining through the imaginativeness and verbal skills of many tellers" (Kroeber, 2004, p. 3). The contemporary art of storytelling is literally an untapped resource for communication scholars. Furthermore, American Indian storytelling is a valuable lens through which to view traditional customs, values, and beliefs.

Unfortunately, traditional American Indian languages are being eradicated and replaced with English. According to Valentine (1992), American Indian traditional languages are in danger of being forgotten:

Approximately 175 indigenous languages are spoken within the boundaries of the United States. Kraus makes the following observations on their relative vitality, though: only about 20 languages are still being learned by children, and so have a reasonable chance of surviving for several generations; about 30 languages are spoken today only by adults, but are not being learned by children; another 70 languages are spoken by the elderly; and another 50 or so are spoken by only a very few of the oldest members of communities. This means that within the next generation approximately 25 percent of the surviving languages will be gone; within two generations well over half will disappear (p. 153.)

Along with the language, American Indian traditions are being forgotten and overlooked. American Indians rely on their families and friends to learn their customs and traditions. Many American Indians do not live on the reservation or move away. In addition, most schools do not teach American Indian traditions, customs, and beliefs. If they do, this knowledge comes from books rather than experience. Stories and experiences such as those collected in this research are imperative to preserve. All American Indian tribes have stories of the paranormal and supernatural., which is an untapped resource for scholars and researchers.

It is important to attempt to understand the complexities and to preserve these contemporary stories of the paranormal and supernatural as told by members of the Three Affiliated Tribes. These stories and experiences have been passed down from generation to generation, and this written account of the stories will remain in place for future generations. Hopefully, this study will be a precursor for similar studies. The rich heritage of the American Indian deserves to be explored and preserved.

Delimitations

These limitations are provided for clarity and direction for this particular study.

1. Data collection was limited to ten members of the Three Affiliated Tribes.
2. Respondents had to be at least eighteen years of age.

3. Respondents had to have spent at least one year on Fort Berthold.
4. The stories and themes are limited to the Three Affiliated Tribes. The results cannot be generalized to other American Indian populations.

Organization of the Study

In Chapter I an explanation for the selected stories and experiences is provided. This chapter also provides a brief discussion of the terms “paranormal” and “supernatural,” and why they were chosen. The chapter concludes with the purpose, need for, and significance of this study.

Chapter II is the literature review. Three interrelated concepts are vital to this study: the American Indian oral tradition, narrative theory, and paranormal beliefs. Chapter III contains the rationale as to why the researcher chose narrative qualitative interviewing as a data collection strategy. Participant selection and participant profiles are included in this chapter. Data analysis concludes the chapter.

In Chapter IV the contemporary stories of the paranormal or supernatural as told by members of the Three Affiliated Tribes are told. In Chapter V the findings of the study are presented. Five subsequent themes emerged. They are discussed along with evidence in the form of quotations from the ten participants. Chapter VI contains conclusions, a discussion of the study, and recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER II

A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Three concepts are particularly relevant to this study, and these concepts comprise the basis of the literature review. These interrelated concepts are the American Indian oral tradition, narrative theory, and paranormal beliefs. The researcher continues to collect stories from members of the Three Affiliated Tribes, but this particular study focuses on ten respondents' stories. It is imperative to understand pivotal issues in the area of American Indian oral tradition when collecting and analyzing these stories. The collected stories fall into the mainstream categories of the paranormal or supernatural. However, many respondents consider these stories as factual, traditional, and significant.

A brief discussion of Walter Fisher's narrative theory and how it relates to storytelling is included. Fisher's narrative theory serves as a bridge between storytelling and paranormal belief systems. Narrative theory also offers a lens in which to view the meaning of these stories. Coherence, fidelity and "good reasons" offer explanations as to why many tribal members believe in these stories and accounts. The study of paranormal and supernatural belief systems have been primarily conducted by those in the fields of social psychology, psychology, and parapsychology. There has been much debate over paranormal and supernatural beliefs. One faction believes that these beliefs are false, while the other faction believes that paranormal and supernatural beliefs are grounded in reality.

American Indian Oral Tradition

In a time before the written word was paramount, cultures thrived on rich oral traditions. Tribes that range from the Southwest to the Great Plains continue to rely on stories to preserve their values, beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors. These stories are not merely fictional fables or a typology of myth and metaphor. "They are facts and truths of Native American cultures and communities. They are at once history and literature, religion and law" (Trafzer, 1998, p.15).

It is unfortunate that the languages of some American tribes are being forgotten and replaced with a universal language that relies less on connotative language than denotative. Most American Indian tribes embrace a high-context culture that values social harmony and the collective good. The best American Indian storytellers were skilled orators fluent in the nonverbal as well as verbal customs of their tribes, and this has been passed on to some contemporary American Indian storytellers (Meyer & Klein, 1994; Valentine, 1994).

Three issues are important when discussing the American Indian oral tradition. These issues include cultural considerations of specific tribes, translation of the spoken word into the written word, and the relationship between the recorder and the storyteller. It is inaccurate to generalize about all American Indians, but this seems to have become almost inevitable. However, these three issues do impact the American Indian oral tradition of most tribes.

Cultural considerations of specific tribes are an important factor when considering the American Indian oral traditions. Despite similarities, tribes are quite different from one another. The tribes of North Dakota are often classified as the Plains tribes, but the

Hidatsa and Lakota tribes are diverse both culturally and orally. The Hopi and Navajo tribes of the Southwest are also different despite proximity. It is important to remember that tribes vary, and despite being categorized and generalized, they remain different (Clements, 1992; Huntsman, 1983; Valentine, 1994).

Stories serve as a means of tying people to specific places (Trafzer, 1998, p.6). Audiences can gain valuable insight into the beliefs, values, customs, and even geographical information from stories. For example, Momaday refers to Devil's Tower in the introduction to his book *The Way to Rainy Mountain*. Devil's Tower is also in the Kiowas' legend that Momaday references. Stories are intricate patchwork quilts of metaphors and vivid imagery. Skilled storytellers are able to create a world with monuments like Devil's Tower and landscapes that were once able to sustain buffalo herds and other animals. It is sometimes difficult to envision such landscapes, because the landscapes have changed over time.

There are specific norms that audiences must adhere to when listening to specific stories. Some stories depict heroes with animals taking on human characteristics, while other stories are sacred. The types of stories can certainly influence the behaviors of these audiences. For some stories, an audience must remain silent out of reverence for the story and the storyteller. The season can also impact when a story can be told. Some types of stories can only be told when specific weather conditions are met. These are all examples of cultural considerations.

According to Huntsman, "the problems confronting the translator [and reader] of Native American literature are immense" (Huntsman, 1983, p.96). American Indian stories were told orally, and most American Indian Tribes did not rely on the written

word. Skilled American orators were able to memorize complex stories and pass these stories onto future generations. In addition, these stories were told in American Indian languages. It is almost impossible not to lose certain nuances and implications in translation. One often cannot translate contextual meanings despite dedication and training.

Storytellers often rely on nonverbal communication to emphasize certain aspects of the story. It is possible to videotape American Indian storytellers, but this does not solve the problem of translating their nonverbal communication. Some stories are told orally and cannot be translated in their entirety. This is problematic to those who want to record and preserve the American Indian oral tradition, but such limitations cannot be overcome so easily. Some communication scholars specialize in performance studies, and the importance of nonverbal communication in American Indian storytelling would be an excellent study. Nonverbal communication is also important to scholars of interpersonal communication, and American Indian storytelling would provide a plethora of insight.

A native recorder would have specific advantages over non-native recorders. However, the native recorder could still be considered an outsider if she/he is not a member of the specific tribe. It would be ideal if all recorders were members of the specific tribe in question, but this is not always possible. Non-native recorders should be aware of some of the customs of the tribe they want to work with. Trafzer (1998) discussed how a principal recorder, Wharton, was a non-native recorder. Wharton was able to solidify a strong relationship with and respect for the people, and this aided him in his quest to record the stories he collected.

The relationship between the storyteller and recorder is reciprocal and symbiotic. Some American Indian storytellers are apprehensive about sharing their stories with outsiders. Though there is no guarantee that each recorder is going to be ethical, one would hope this to be the case. However, some researchers may be inadvertently unethical due to inexperience. Gaining permission should be a universal norm when collecting stories or testimonials. Some recorders bypass this by relying on the relationship they have with their respondents. Others know that they would never gain this permission and record their respondents without permission. Such behaviors violate the trust relationship between recorder and respondent.

Recorders rely on various methods to capture the stories they seek. Some recorders are skilled at utilizing memory and notes. Others have become more reliant on technology like audio and visual recording equipment. A recorder who utilizes notes and his/her memory may seem less intrusive to the storyteller. However, nonverbal communication can be captured by visual recording equipment. In addition, a recorder would be confident that he/she captured everything the respondent said by implementing an audio recorder.

American Indian storytelling remains a powerful constant in a changing landscape of American history. It is discouraging that American Indian languages are disappearing, and the stories themselves may disappear along with the languages. However, some recorders are intent on preserving the stories and languages for future generations, a noble and daunting task. There are numerous issues to consider like translation, the relationship between recorder and storyteller, and cultural issues of specific tribes. A resilient recorder will take all of these issues into consideration.

Walter Fisher and the Nature of Storytelling

Stories are an integral part of any community's culture. American Indian societies did not rely on a written language, so oral traditions were created to pass along stories from generation to generation. Despite the diverse styles and types of stories, all cultures share the ability to pass along stories. "Storytelling is a universal experience shared by every social group" (Carter-Black, 2007, p. 32).

"We must recognize that the symbolic forms we call folklore have their primary existence in the action of people and their roots in social and cultural life" (Bauman, 1992, p. 2). Folktales have often been thought of as mere forms of mindless entertainment. However, folktales have strong significance to specific cultures. Folktales may convey information about a culture and that particular culture's social aspects, including taboos.

It has been argued that children are indoctrinated to a particular culture by the use of narrative or story. Stories are valuable tools to teach impressionable children the social norms, beliefs, values, and even taboos of a culture. For example, the Bible is riddled with parables that teach individuals valuable lessons. Aesop's fables, like "The Tortoise and the Hare," teach the value of determination. "Concurrently referred to as oral tradition, performance narrative, oral literature, and/or folklore, storytelling is a complex, dynamic, integral component of the process by which children are socialized into their cultural world" (Carter-Black, 2007, p. 33).

According to Basso (1996) "place-related narrative events" are a particular type of narrative. These types of narratives serve to teach individuals about their environment:

These place-related narrative events function as ways in which culturally diverse peoples are alive to the world around them, of how they comprehend it, of the different modes of awareness with which they take it in and discover that it matters" (p. 54).

American Indians have relied on the oral tradition throughout their existence.

Despite this strong oral tradition, modern American Indians have adapted to their current environments. Most American Indian tribes have a strong connection with nature and spirits, but individuals have had to adjust their communication to diverse audiences that may not share the same ideologies. So, research has been conducted on how individuals from specific cultures adapt to society in general. "Such findings would suggest that speakers may embrace the ideologies invoked by their community's preferred communicative practices, but not at all times for all audiences. Speakers perhaps can embrace multiple ways of 'seeing' reality" (Kryatzis, 2005, p. 149).

More sophisticated members of the community are responsible for indoctrinating other members of the community with communicative processes that, in turn, serve as a means of seeing a collective reality. However, members of multiethnic communities are inundated with diverse communicate processes (Miller, Hengst, Alexander, & Sperry, 2000). American Indians have learned to adapt to such communicative conditions. American Indian college students who have lived on a reservation and attend colleges have to adapt to diverse communicative strategies.

Stories have been used to stimulate healing in addition to teaching valuable lessons. "Narrative and storytelling are important parts of the healing process" (Turner, 2003). A prominent example of this is in recovery programs like Alcoholics Anonymous. Members of AA utilize stories to aid in the recovery process. Sick children have begged

loved ones to read them or tell them bedtime stories for centuries. Stories often serve as invaluable tools to help other recover from all sorts of ailments.

Some fables, myths, legends, folk tales and folklore are aimed at modifying or instilling specific social behaviors (Coe, Aiken, & Palmer, 2006). Fisher (1987) argues that stories are often more persuasive than other forms of communication. It would be difficult to teach young children by offering expert testimony or statistics. Stories, however, are much more useful when educating young children. It could also be argued that stories are valuable in teaching specific social behaviors to any member of a community.

Poignant and effective stories share specific characteristics (Coe, Aiken, & Palmer, 2006). There are numerous characteristics of stories examined in the literature, but Coe et al. utilize a useful rubric of characteristics. Their version of the characteristics of stories include the following: form, characters, contextual or environmental cues, attractiveness, and memorability. This is a useful list of characteristics that can be applied to both written and oral stories.

Story forms are as diverse as they are numerous. Forms can range from the traditional beginning, middle, and end to a somewhat more chaotic structure. American Indian stories, on the other hand, may be confusing for non-American Indians to fathom or understand. American Indian storytelling is quite different from traditional means of storytelling, because American Indian storytelling has flourished as an oral tradition (Clements, 1992; Huntsman, 1983; Roemer, 1983).

Most of the stories collected in this study included some sort of characters. The more popular stories have a protagonist and an antagonist. Characters do not always have

to be human, however. There are numerous stories that personify animals and objects as characters (Roemer, 1983). A popular story from the Arikara nation involves an antelope and the mighty Thunderbird.

The context and environment in which the story occurs is an important aspect of storytelling. "Context can be defined as the set of circumstances or facts that surround an event or situation" (Coe, Aiken, & Palmer, 2006, p. 26). The environment is a crucial aspect of storytelling. Characters will interact with their environments, and a listener might inquisitively ask, "Where did this occur?" if it is not apparently clear. Science fiction, on the other hand, can have extraordinary environments. This is also true for some indigenous forms of storytelling (Roemer, 1983).

The story does not need to be sensational to grab the audience's attention. However, the story must be somewhat attractive to the audience. Skillful storytellers know the value of creating stories that resonate with audience members. This does not mean that the stories need to be believable. In fact, some of the most attractive stories do not adhere to what mainstream audiences would deem "realistic."

According to Coe, Aiken, & Palmer (2006) the absence of a written language has forced storytellers to rely on memory:

In traditional societies, storytellers often need to remember, with some precision, the entire story, and even the sequence of the collection of stories to which it may belong or, minimally, they need to remember at least the core, or theme, of the story (p. 28).

American Indians have relied upon "intergenerational cooperation" to pass along stories from generation to generation. "Intergenerational cooperation is required for the telling of a traditional story [one must tell the story and the other must listen] and for its transmission to the next generation" (Coe, Aiken, & Palmer, 2006, p. 29). In addition to

cooperation, a listener must respect the storyteller. An apathetic listener is not going to grasp the meaning of the story or be able to recite the same story to others.

Traditional stories have strict guidelines that should not be violated. The penalty for violating norms varies according to the specific community. "Traditional stories must be told according to traditional rules regarding how and when they can be told, who can tell them and who can listen; bad things allegedly happen if the tradition is broken" (Coe, Aiken, & Palmer, 2006, p. 29). Erdoes and Ortiz (1998) note that, among traditional American Indian tribes, stories must be told according to tradition even if the story contains surreal creatures or is told for entertainment purposes.

Some stories are told to demonstrate the value of self-sacrificing behaviors. This is a common theme in traditional stories told by indigenous and non-indigenous communities alike. The connection between traditional stories and self-sacrificing behavior was recognized by Malinowski (1979, p. 45), who pointed out that myths are "closely connected with the nature of tradition" and influence generation after generation of listeners to "surrender some of their self-love and self-seeking".

Walter Fisher, once a political scientist, learned the value and persuasive nature of storytelling. He even went so far as to claim that all communication is storytelling, in a sense. Walter Fisher eventually became a communication theorist and made the claim that human beings are naturally storytellers (1978, 1984, 1987). "We continuously weave discrete events and experiences together into coherent wholes that have all the features of stories: a plot; characters; action; a sequence of beginning, middle, and end; and a climax" (Wood, 2000, p. 112).

Human beings are separated from other members of the animal kingdom because humans are storytelling beings. This storytelling ability, or narrative capacity, is basic and distinctive to human nature. Fisher (1987) asserted that we come to terms with our own experiences by morphing them into stories. He also maintained that stories human beings tell have the classic components of characterization, plot, and sequential patterns. We use these devices even in our everyday speech patterns. Much of our everyday dialogue is story, and we have come to rely on stories to illustrate our points.

Fisher called his theory the narrative paradigm. Fisher defined narration as “symbolic actions—words and/or deeds—that have sequence and meaning for those who live, create, or interpret them” (1987, p. 58). This may seem broad, but Fisher meant that storytelling is a continuous process. Storytelling is as natural to human beings as breathing air. Even young children are capable of telling stories, and stories are often the easiest way for young children to convey information to others. Whether all humans admit it or not, stories are continuous in everyday life.

Despite being natural-born storytellers, not all humans are equally skilled at telling stories. To combat the notion that the narrative paradigm does not offer a standard for determining the quality of stories, Fisher advocated the concept of narrative rationality. “We judge stories on the basis of a distinctively narrative form of rationality, which Fisher saw as quite different from conventional criteria of rationality [those in the rational world view]” (Wood, 2000, p. 114). In other words, traditional logic is not useful in gauging the quality or believability of particular stories.

One of the criteria Fisher suggests for evaluating narrative rationality is coherence. “We judge whether the storyteller told us all of the important details so that

the outcome is believable" (Wood, 2000, p. 115). Listeners or audiences will question the storyteller if the story does not form a cohesive whole. A fantastic story can be believable, but the story must have coherence.

Fisher (1987) suggested a second standard for narrative rationality, fidelity. He defined fidelity as the extent to which a story resonates with a listener's experiences, values, beliefs, and self-concept. This is one reason sensational stories are believable to certain individuals. For example, some cultures believe in the existence of spirits that embody all aspects of nature. The stories that are told about these spirits resonate with members of the particular culture because of this fidelity.

Paranormal or Supernatural Beliefs

Human beings have struggled to understand the numerous facets of the mind, the soul, the natural world, and the unknown. Through empiricism, humankind has been able to decipher many phenomena. However, there are certain phenomena that science has not been able to help humankind discern. The unknown has fascinated humankind since the Pliocene epoch and continues to fascinate believers and skeptics alike. At the heart of the issue of paranormal or supernatural beliefs is a question: Is intellectual reasoning or logic capable of fathoming the paranormal or supernatural (Puhle & Paker, 2004)?

Some researchers have devoted time and effort to exploring paranormal beliefs. "The study of paranormal beliefs, therefore, has assumed psychological importance, and the area has attracted a substantial number of researchers" (Grimmer & White, 1990, p. 3). However, there is a debate over paranormal beliefs. On the one hand, skeptics argue that paranormal beliefs merely fulfill a need. Other skeptics argue that hegemony plays a crucial part in paranormal belief systems. Those without social power are more likely to

believe in the paranormal. Still others claim that mental disorders are responsible for causing such beliefs.

Opponents of those who study paranormal phenomena claim that this type of study is a false science. Paranormal or supernatural researchers delve into what is commonly called "irrefutable hypotheses." Creationists and those who believe in Biblical doctrine have also been cited as relying on "irrefutable hypotheses." This makes absolute sense, because many social and natural scientists rely on empirical observations and absolute quantifiable data. These researchers seek answers, whereas those who study paranormal or supernatural phenomena must deal in uncertainties and tantalizing clues.

Hines (2003) claims that practitioners of parapsychology, psychical research, and the like practice what he calls "pseudoscience":

The most common characteristic of a pseudoscience is the nonfalsifiable or irrefutable hypothesis. This is a hypothesis against which there can be no evidence--that is, no evidence can show the hypothesis to be wrong. It might at first seem that such a hypothesis must be true, but a bit of reflection and several examples will demonstrate just the opposite (p.13).

One of the most utilized irrefutable hypotheses is that the earth was created ten thousand years ago, according to creationists who believe in Biblical doctrine. Creationists take it for granted that the earth was created ten thousand years ago. However, physical evidence exists which is scientifically dated as older than ten thousand years. Despite the evidence to the contrary, creationists stand by their irrefutable hypothesis (Hines, 2003).

On the other side, some individuals have devoted themselves to researching the realm of the paranormal or supernatural. Some call themselves parapsychologists, psychical researchers, or simply believers in some aspects of unknown phenomena. To

these individuals, current methodologies are incapable of assisting humans in deciphering the unknown. These researchers are willing to suspend empiricism for a chance to glimpse into the unknown. Some of the most well-known paranormal research organizations include The New England Society for Psychic Research and Parapsychology Foundation, Inc.

A tantalizing aspect for researchers of the paranormal is the universality of some common phenomena. According to McClenon (2004) human beings across the world experience similar forms of paranormal or supernatural phenomena:

Researchers have found that people all over the world experience similar forms of apparitions, waking extrasensory perceptions (ESP), paranormal dreams, sleep paralysis, out-of-body experience, synchronicity, psychokinesis (PK), and spiritual healing. These experiences generate belief in spirits, souls, life after death, and magical abilities (p. 25).

Numerous definitions of the paranormal or supernatural have been proposed by researchers throughout the years. "Researchers have frequently used the terms paranormal and supernatural interchangeably in the empirical literature" (Beck & Miller, 2001, p. 1). Regardless, some factor analytic studies (Grimmer & White, 1990; Haraldsson & Houtkooper, 1996; Johnson, de Groot, & Spanos, 1995) that differentiate between paranormal and supernatural beliefs have found that some individuals do distinguish between paranormal beliefs like extra-sensory perception and supernatural phenomena associated with religion like angels and miracles.

Other researchers prefer terms that adhere to their notions of these types of beliefs that lie just outside the realm of possibility. "Belief in concepts or phenomena that are not accepted by the cultural mainstream is known as anomalous or unconventional belief" (George, 1995, p.16). These "anomalous or unconventional beliefs" range from

phenomena that affect an individual like extra-sensory perception to phenomena that affect geographic locations like the Bermuda Triangle.

According to Lindeman and Aarnio (2006), a more ontological approach to defining paranormal beliefs is appropriate:

We use the term paranormal belief to denote all kinds of superstitious, supernatural, and magical beliefs. When referring to other researchers' text, however, we use the terminology of the original publications. We define paranormal beliefs as beliefs in physical, biological, or physiological phenomena that feature fundamental or core ontological properties of another ontological category" (p. 586).

Perhaps, the most exhaustive investigation into the structure of paranormal beliefs was produced by Tobayck and Milford (1983). "They argued that the structure of such beliefs is an empirical question that should not be assumed by researchers, and they attempted to devise a paranormal belief questionnaire using a factor analytic procedure" (Grimmer & White, 1990, p. 4).

Tobacyk and Milford (1983) developed a paranormal belief questionnaire with seven subscales: Traditional Religious Belief, Psi Belief, Witchcraft, Superstition, Spiritualism, Extraordinary Life-Forms, and Precognition (Tobacyk, 1988). "The results of many studies show relationships between specific subscales or types of beliefs with other psychological factors involving paranormal belief" (Rudski, 2003, p. 433). It may be important to studies of paranormal beliefs to realize that individuals do have beliefs that fall into various subscales.

Does an individual's level of education affect her/his beliefs in the paranormal or supernatural? "Over the past 50 years, there has been a continuing interest in the possible role of education in the maintenance and the extinction of nonconventional (paranormal or superstitious) beliefs" (Grimmer & White, 1992, p.1). It has been hypothesized that

students in the sciences hold fewer nonconventional beliefs than non-science students. It has also been hypothesized that individuals with a higher education level will hold more nonconventional beliefs than their less educated counterparts.

Pasachoff (1970) conducted research at Harvard University and found that students in the social sciences and humanities reported higher belief scores than science students. Salter and Routledge (1971) studied students from the University of Pennsylvania and discovered a trend in the opposite direction. Tobacyk, Miller, and Jones (1984) discovered a negative correlation between scores on a 25-item Paranormal Belief Scale and number of science courses taken among a sample of Los Angeles students (Tobacyk & Milford, 1983). These studies suggested that a correlation between education and paranormal beliefs is inconclusive at this time.

Much of the research into paranormal belief is driven by what has been deemed deprivation theory. This particular theory asserts that paranormal beliefs provide people with the means to cope with the strain of being socially and economically disadvantaged (Clock and Stark, 1965; Stark and Bainbridge, 1980). "Thus, belief in the paranormal should be higher among marginal social groups, such as minorities and the poor" (Rice, 2003, p. 2). Research has suggested that rural dwellers hold more paranormal beliefs than urban dwellers, and Midwesterners and Southerners hold more paranormal beliefs than Westerners and Easterners (Rice, 2003).

Beliefs fill a need whether they are conventional or nonconventional. Nonconventional or anomalous beliefs are prevalent in all cultures, and the family is usually a conduit for the transmission of these belief systems. Hegemonic principles also guide the transmission of these beliefs. Those in society who hold little power against the

status quo may hold reverent ideas of the supernatural or paranormal. At times, phenomena cannot be explained, and nonconventional beliefs seem like the only explanation. Finally, some may think that believers in the paranormal have something wrong with them. There have been numerous circumstances when individuals plagued by mental disorders adamantly believed something extraordinary was responsible (George, 1995).

It was important for the researcher to keep these interrelated concepts in mind when conducting this study. These interrelated concepts included: the American Indian oral tradition, narrative theory, and paranormal beliefs. Researchers need to have a strong sense of the concepts they are exploring. It is true that the nature of qualitative research is to search for possible answers through the methodology, but it is also important to have a grasp of the theory and related concepts.

Summary

Chapter I provided a rationale for collecting American Indian stories as well as an explanation for the selected stories and experiences. This chapter also provided a brief discussion of the terms “paranormal” and “supernatural,” and why they were chosen. The chapter concluded with the purpose, need, and significance of this study.

Chapter II comprised a comprehensive literature review. Three interrelated concepts were vital to this study. These interrelated concepts were the American Indian oral tradition, narrative theory, and paranormal beliefs.

Chapter III contains the rationale as to why the researcher chose narrative qualitative interviewing. Next, there is a discussion about participant selection and participant profiles. Data analysis concludes the chapter

Chapter IV presents the contemporary stories of the paranormal or supernatural as told by members of the Three Affiliated Tribes. Chapter V is an overview of the findings of the study. Five subsequent themes emerged supported by evidence in the form of quotations from the ten participants. Chapter VI contains conclusions, a discussion of the study, and recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Chapter III is a discussion of the qualitative research methods utilized to complete this research project and an overview of participant selection with profiles of the ten respondents. This study pertains to American Indians and their reliance on an oral tradition to pass on customs and beliefs. However, this study is different from others devoted to American Indian stories because of the types of stories the researcher collected. This particular study focused on contemporary stories of the paranormal or supernatural as told by members of the Three Affiliated Tribes. The stories the researcher collected are valuable data that can be utilized in future studies. Due to these parameters, narrative qualitative research methods were preferable to quantitative research methods.

Purpose of the Study

In 2004, several people on the Fort Bethold Indian Reservation claimed to have seen the legendary Bigfoot. Residents have also witnessed other peculiar instances of the paranormal or supernatural. In order to fathom the origin or meaning of these experiences, we must first collect the stories and compare them. Much can be learned from contemporary stories told by indigenous people. Many researchers have looked to stories from the past, but few have researched contemporary stories of American Indians. "Narration is a common mode of communication. People tell stories to entertain, to teach and to learn, to ask for an interpretation and to give one" (Czarniawska, 2004, p. 10).

The purpose of this particular narrative study was to discover where these stories and experiences originated and their meaning. It is also important to learn how these stories differ from other stories of the paranormal or supernatural, and how they connect to traditional American Indian customs, beliefs, and values. Finally, the researcher wanted to learn if the respondents believe in these stories of the paranormal or supernatural.

Method of the Study

This study incorporates elements of qualitative research design in the form of interviews. The researcher utilized open-ended questions and invitations to share stories of the paranormal or supernatural. Interview questions may be found in Appendix B. Several questions were designed to ensure that the participants met the requirements for the study. Then, the researcher asked the respondents about specific phenomena from Fort Berthold. Ten participants were invited to partake in this particular study through the researcher's contacts on the Fort Berthold Reservation. Participants were interviewed once with follow-up phone calls for clarification. The stories took the form of experiences and stories the respondents either encountered or heard from relatives, friends, and occasionally non-tribal members. Themes and assertions became apparent after data analysis.

Nature of Narrative Qualitative Research

The goals of this study were to learn more about the contemporary oral tradition of American Indians on a reservation in the Midwest and to preserve these stories for future generations. In order to do this, the researcher relied on interviews to decipher meanings and possible origins of contemporary stories of the paranormal or supernatural.

Due to the nature of this particular study, the researcher chose to utilize qualitative research methods. Specifically, a series of open-ended questions were asked of each participant. After the researcher screened each respondent for the specific criteria, the researcher asked each respondent to tell stories of the paranormal or supernatural that relate to Fort Berthold.

Denzin and Lincoln (1994) assert that qualitative research is complex and focuses on human beings and the meanings they find in everyday phenomena:

Qualitative research is multimethod in focus, involving an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. Qualitative research involves the studied use and collection of a variety of empirical materials--case study, personal experience, introspective, life story, interview, observational, historical, interactional, and visual texts--that describe routine and problematic moments and meaning in individual's lives (p. 2).

The researcher chose to utilize qualitative research methods due to the nature of American Indian storytelling. American Indians find meaning in stories, and absolute empirical certainties are not necessary. Respondents lived on Fort Berthold for at least one year, or they spent at least a nonconsecutive year on Fort Berthold. This time frame was essential, because the researcher wanted to ensure that the respondents were involved in their "natural settings." The researcher relied on numerous methods to collect the data including narrative interviews, notes, and transcribed stories. Each respondent agreed to have the interview audiotaped for later transcription. The interviews were transcribed by the researcher.

The basis of this study was the researcher's quest for reasons certain people believe in the power of storytelling when these stories may seem paranormal or supernatural. Storytelling has been apart of American Indian culture for centuries, but

American Indians are still telling stories that mainstream culture has identified as paranormal or supernatural. It is imperative to preserve these remnants of contemporary American Indian culture, but it is also important to understand why people believe in these stories. Another component for study is the question of origin. Where did these contemporary stories of the paranormal or supernatural originate? All of these questions or problems motivated the researcher to seek answers through qualitative research methods.

Creswell (1998) discussed how qualitative research methods are utilized to solve humanistic problems:

Qualitative research is an inquiry process of understanding based on distinct methodological traditions of inquiry that explore a social or human problem. The researcher builds a complex, holistic picture, analyzes words, reports detailed views of informants, and conducts the study in a natural setting (p. 15).

Research participants were asked to share any stories or experiences that related to Fort Berthold. Initially, the researcher was uncertain how to ask for stories of the paranormal or supernatural. However, all of the respondents understood what was meant by the terms "paranormal" and "supernatural." The researcher had an initial goal in mind, but the abundance of fascinating stories led the researcher on a journey of intuitive discovery instead of a quest for definitive empirical results. "A qualitative study has a focus but that focus is initially broad and open-ended, allowing for important meanings to be discovered" (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994, p. 43).

Many people are unaware of the rich and beautiful oral tradition of the American Indians. The misconception that American Indian oral tradition is a romantic historical tradition is detrimental. This study is an attempt to explore the contemporary American Indian oral tradition and the meanings behind these stories. The respondents are all

members of the Three Affiliated Tribes, and they are familiar with life on Fort Berthold through experience. Qualitative researchers utilize methods in order to attempt to comprehend social phenomenon from the human characters' perspective. An added bonus may be the altering of the status quo, thus changing or morphing existing social conditions (Glesne, 2006).

Creswell (1998) listed eight compelling reasons to engage in qualitative inquiry and apply qualitative research methods:

1. Select a qualitative study because of the nature of the research question. In a qualitative study, the research question often starts with a *how* or a *what* so that initial forays into the topic describe what is going on.
2. Choose a qualitative study because the topic needs to be *explored*.
3. Use a qualitative study because of the need to present a *detailed view* of the topic. The wide-angle lens or the distant panoramic shot will not suffice to present answers to the problem, or the close-up view does not exist.
4. Choose a qualitative approach in order to study individuals in their *natural setting*. This involves going out to the setting or field of study, gaining access, and gathering material.
5. Select a qualitative approach because of interest in *writing* in a literary style; the writer brings himself or herself into the study, the personal pronoun "I" is used, or perhaps the writer engages a storytelling form of narration.
6. Employ a qualitative study because of *sufficient time and resources* to spend on extensive data collection in the field and detailed analysis of text information.
7. Select a qualitative approach because *audiences are receptive* to qualitative research. This audience might be a graduate adviser or committee, a discipline inclusive of multiple research methodologies, or publication outlets with editors receptive to qualitative approaches.
8. Employ a qualitative approach to emphasize the researcher's role as an *active learner* who can tell the story from the participants' view rather than as an 'expert' who passes judgment on participants (pp. 17-18).

After reviewing the criteria for conducting qualitative research, the researcher was

confident qualitative research methods were best suited for this study. This topic needed to be explored rather than deduced, and the respondents were in their natural setting. The researcher's role was that of an active learner rather than an "expert." The goal of this study was to discover meanings in the stories people tell rather than proving a hypothesis.

Interviewing

Respondents should not be poked and prodded along. Narrative interviews were more beneficial to the study, because strictly structured interviews would have forced the respondents to answer questions the way the researcher wanted them to. The stories themselves contain a plethora of information about the respondents and their environments. However, the researcher needed to ask some identifying questions for practical purposes and to help establish rapport. Participants were expected to share their stories and experiences, but additional questions were required in order to answer the research questions. A variety of techniques were required, but narrative interviews were the primary method of acquiring the data.

One issue that plagued the researcher was the suitable number of respondents for this study. The researcher began with twenty participants, but the population he studied was homogenous on many levels. The most important factor was that the participants all had the same tribal affiliation. Ten participants were chosen, because the researcher was confident that ten narratives would provide a plethora of experiences and stories. "The method of indepth, phenomenological interviewing applied to a sample of participants who all experience similar structural and social conditions gives enormous power to the stories of a relatively few participants" (Seidman, 2006, p. 55).

Two issues should be addressed by researchers when deciding upon the necessary number of respondents for particular studies. Are there sufficient numbers to reflect the range of participants and sites that make up the population so that others outside the sample might have a chance to connect to the experiences of those in it (Seidman, 2006)? The other question deals with saturation of information. Has enough information been found so that the researcher is confident that the information encompasses the phenomena (Creswell, 1998)? After the transcription and data analysis of the ten interviews, the researcher was convinced that both of these issues were adequately addressed.

In a sense, the researcher was asking for life stories and experiences. If we take seriously the idea that people make sense of experience and communicate meaning through narration, then in-depth interviews should become occasions in which we ask for life stories. By analyzing such narrated life stories, two levels of analysis can be distinguished: the analysis of the lived-through, the experienced life history, and the analysis of the narrated life story (Chase, 1995; Josselson & Lieblich, 1993).

We can learn much from participants willing to share their experiences as stories rather than open-ended answers. Strictly structured interviews or surveys may distort the respondents' experiences by forcing them to respond to specific and narrow questions. This type of interview is necessary, but sharing stories or experiences of the paranormal or supernatural require the interviewee to open himself or herself up to the researcher. In a sense, the interviewee will be sharing his or her life in story form with the interviewer.

What distinguishes the narrative interview is its two-fold nature as an empirical approach and as an ontological paradigm (Lindloff & Taylor, 2002). Narrative interviews

capture and explicate the “whole story,” unlike other types of interviews, which take stories apart and reassemble the parts for their own analytic purposes. Also, it is not incidental that storytelling itself is the vehicle for generating story data. The performance often holds as much interest as the story content (Lindloff & Taylor, 2002, p. 145).

The following open ended questions were used in this study:

1. What name may I call you?
2. Your age?
3. What is your tribal affiliation?
4. Do you live on or off the reservation?
 - a. How much time have you spent on the reservation?
5. What is your occupation?
6. Have you ever heard any paranormal or supernatural stories about the reservation or about the people who live on the reservation now?
7. Have you ever experienced anything paranormal or supernatural on the reservation?
8. Please share any stories or experiences of the supernatural or paranormal kind that you have heard or experienced that deal with Fort Berthold. In particular, can you tell me anything about Bigfoot, Hoofman, the Little People, or any places that are known to be supernatural or paranormal?
9. How are these stories/experiences different from similar stories/experiences of non-tribal members?
10. Do you think that most members of the Three Affiliated Tribes believe in these stories?

Participant Selection

The researcher decided to interview enrolled members of the Three Affiliated Tribes located in North Dakota because he had easy access to the location and the people. There are numerous tribes in North Dakota and across the United States, but the researcher wanted to narrow the scope of this particular study to one reservation. However, there are three distinct tribes that share this reservation. These tribes include the Hidatsa, the Arikara, and the Mandan. Many respondents share a common lineage from all three distinct tribes. For example, the researcher is part Hidatsa and part Mandan.

Since the researcher is interested in contemporary stories of the paranormal or supernatural, age of subject was not of particular concern. Other studies are devoted to preserving and researching traditional stories from past generations. Such studies demanded a specific age group, primarily elders from a particular tribe. Due to Institutional Review Board concerns with minors, participants had to be at least 18 years of age. The researcher wanted to recruit an equal number of males and females, but this was not a major concern. Gender was not an important variable in this particular study.

Research participants were actively recruited by the researcher. He relied on contacts with knowledgeable members of the Three Affiliated Tribes. The interviews were approximately sixty to ninety minutes each. The researcher is an enrolled member of the Three Affiliated Tribes, and this allowed him more insight into the culture. In most instances, the respondents felt comfortable with an interviewer who was from Fort Berthold. This rapport was essential in attaining the stories and experiences. Establishing

this rapport was essential, since these stories and experiences are closely tied to each respondent's family, traditions, and customs.

Participant selection relies on many criteria, but in the end it is up to the discretion of the principal investigator.

The strategy of participant selection in qualitative inquiry rests on the multiple purposes of illuminating, interpreting, and understanding- and on your own imagination and judgment. Develop an explicit rationale, however, for participant selection based upon theory, personal hunches, and your pilot study (Glesne, p. 36 2006).

Participant Profiles

Michael

Michael is a 26-year old male student. He is a member of the Three Affiliated Tribes who has spent approximately twenty-five years on the reservation. Michael currently lives off the reservation.

Mandy

Mandy is a 32-year old nurse and mother. Mandy is a member of the Three Affiliated Tribes and the Turtle Mountain band of Chippewa. She has spent all of her life on the reservation. Mandy currently lives on the reservation. She has both heard stories and experienced paranormal or supernatural phenomena on Fort Berthold.

Bob

Bob is a 29- year old male graduate student at the University of North Dakota. He has spent about eight years on and off the reservation. He is in the process of moving back to Fort Berthold.

Jon

Jon is a 34- year old shelter supervisor. Jon lived on the reservation until he was 11 years old. He currently lives off the reservation; however, Jon frequently returns to Fort Berthold for miscellaneous activities.

Bernadette

Bernadette is a 54-year old member of the Three Affiliated Tribes. She graduated from high school and then went to college to earn a social work major. Bernadette has lived on the reservation for 14 years. She currently does contractual work and continues to live on the reservation.

Eva

Eva is a 22- year old college student. Eva is currently attending school at Fort Berthold. She has spent most of her life on the reservation, but Eva plans on leaving Fort Berthold for school out of state.

April

April is a 20-year old University of North Dakota student. She is a member of the Three Affiliated Tribes, and she has spent her entire life on the reservation. April returns home every weekend from school.

Margie

Margie is a 21-year old college student who currently lives off the reservation. She is a mother in addition to being a student. She lived on the Fort Berthold consistently until she moved away during high school.

Embala

Embala is a 49- year old member of the Three Affiliated Tribes. She currently works as a research assistant. Embala has spent approximately 20 years on Fort Berthold.

Susie

Susie is a 32- year old mother of two. She has lived approximately 7 years on Fort Berthold. Susie is currently a part time student, and she is independently employed at the current time.

Data Analysis

After the data was collected and transcribed, the researcher was immersed in a plethora of raw interview data. The researcher transcribed the interviews, and this proved advantageous. The transcription process allowed the researcher an opportunity to hear the interviews and stories a second time, and he was able to formulate a notion of codes and categories early on in the process. The processes of coding and categorizing are imperative to achieving clarity and understanding qualitative information (Lindloff & Taylor, 2002).

The first step in data analysis was to carefully code the data. Glesne (2006) defines coding as a time-consuming and thorough process:

Coding is a process of sorting and defining and defining and sorting those scraps of collected data. (i.e., observation notes, interview transcripts, memos, documents, and notes from relevant literature) that are applicable to your research purpose. By putting like-minded pieces together into data clumps, you create an organizational framework. It is progressive in that you first develop, out of the data, major code clumps by which to sort the data. Then you code the contents of each major code clump, thereby breaking down the major codes into numerous subcodes (p. 152).

Codes served as links between the raw data and the principal investigator's categories. As Charmaz (1983) explains, "Codes...serve as shorthand devices to *label*,

separate, compile, and organize data. Codes range from simple, concrete, and topical categories to more general, abstract conceptual categories from emerging theory” (p. 111). Codes and categories made the analysis of the superfluous mound of stories manageable.

In this particular study, the researcher read all ten interviews for emergent codes. The transcribed interviews were printed with three-inch margins to assist in the coding process. Some of the participant respondents did not share as many experiences and stories as others. However, codes emerged despite the limited self-disclosure from some of the more apprehensive respondents. Some of the codes that emerged include spirituality, family and friends, traditions, and taboos.

The next step in the process involved categorization. The codes were collected and placed into categories. “Categorization refers to the process of characterizing the meaning of a unit of data with respect to certain generic properties” (Lindloff & Taylor, 2002, p. 214). This process involved assembling the codes and creating three categories: Experiences, tribal beliefs, and spirituality.

Table 1. Schematic of Codes, Categories, and Themes.

CODES	CATEGORIES	THEMES
❖ Values ❖ Language ❖ Traditions	Fidelity	Research participants believe in the stories, because of their values and beliefs.
❖ Family ❖ Elders ❖ Credibility		Research participants believe in the stories, because the stories come from family and elders.
❖ Origins ❖ Tribal Beliefs ❖ Meanings	Origins	These stories and experiences originated from tribal beliefs.
❖ Spirits ❖ Ceremonies ❖ "Hotspots"	Spirituality	Research participants consider these stories spiritual rather than paranormal or supernatural.
❖ Taboos ❖ Warnings ❖ Lessons		Research participants consider these stories warnings or taboos.

Summary

Chapter I provided an explanation for the selected stories and experiences. This chapter also provided a brief discussion of the terms "paranormal" and "supernatural," and why they were chosen. The chapter concluded with the purpose, need, and significance of this study.

Chapter II was a comprehensive literature review. Three interrelated concepts were vital to this study. These interrelated concepts were American Indian oral tradition, narrative theory, and paranormal beliefs.

Chapter III contained the rationale as to why the researcher chose narrative qualitative interviewing. Next, there was a discussion about participant selection and participant profiles. Data analysis concluded the chapter.

Chapter IV presents the contemporary stories of the paranormal or supernatural as told by members of the Three Affiliated Tribes. Chapter V is an overview of the findings of the study. Five subsequent themes emerged with evidence in the form of quotations from the ten participants. Chapter VI contains conclusions, a discussion of the study, and recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER IV

CONTEMPORARY STORIES OF THE PARANORMAL OR SUPERNATURAL AS TOLD BY MEMBERS OF THE THREE AFFILIATED TRIBES

Introduction

This chapter is a collection of transcribed stories from ten members of the Three Affiliated Tribes. The interviewer asked a series of questions to establish the qualifications of each respondent. Next, the respondents were asked to share any stories of the paranormal or supernatural about Fort Berthold. These stories had to undergo minor revisions and formatting. Each respondent was at least eighteen years of age and an enrolled member of the Three Affiliated Tribes, having spent at least one year on the reservation. All of the stories and experiences pertain to the Fort Berthold Indian Reservation in North Dakota. The stories may be difficult to comprehend at times, but the reader must keep in mind that these stories were told orally. It is imperative to preserve as much of the original story as possible, despite the numerous nuances of slang and everyday speech.

Little People

Little People, fairies, leprechauns, and the like have been reported by numerous cultures across the United States and around the world. Numerous members of the Three Affiliated Tribes have a name for these little beings. They are commonly called "Little People," but there is a traditional word for them. The researcher will not share the word here out of respect for the respondents. It is a sacred word that is not supposed to be spoken out loud, out of fear of provoking the wrath of the Little People.

The stories from all of the respondents are very similar. These creatures seem to originate from Bakersville, but they have been seen all over Fort Berthold. They seem to be miniscule pranksters or tricksters that appear to many members of the Three Affiliated Tribes. All of the respondents believe that these beings are spirits. These spirits seem to like children and relish harassing people. Their appearances seem to fluctuate in the stories, but the overall similarities far outweigh the differences among the different versions from the respondents.

All of the respondents were aware of the Little People, even some of the more apprehensive respondents.. This may be due to the abundance of Little People stories on Fort Berthold. However, this does not explain why all of the respondents share a belief in Little People. The basis for the respondents' belief in Little People, is direct experience: They have either seen them or heard from credible sources like relatives, close friends, or elders.

The Stories

Michael

I haven't seen them but once again like I've heard stories. There's a community called the Four Bears Village and for some reason around there there's hills that surround that village. For some reason in that area they seem to see them [the Little People] a lot around there, and it's usually younger kids. For some reason they seem to see them a lot more. I think that they like little kids. They don't hurt them, but they'll just play with them. I've heard stories where they protect them and watch over them.

Mandy

I know I've heard a lot of stories about Little People. There's a lot of different versions. They always say you're not supposed to be partying around at night and in the trees and hollering and screaming around or they'll come and mess with you. They like to come after your kids and play with your kids. hey'll take them. I had a friend, and her whole family swears that they were attacked by Little People in their own home. They had to have it smudged off and stuff. They feel it was something they were doing bad so those Little People were coming and kind of getting after them. They were poking at their kids and jumping on her boyfriend who lived there. He couldn't see them but he could feel them. They could hear them on their roof.

I heard of a lady who came into her house, and there was one of those people in her fridge. The little person was looking in her fridge. I've had an uncle who woke up one night, and there was a little person standing on his bed looking at him. My daughter, my own daughter at the casino, one time saw something. She was saying it was a monkey. She was calling it a monkey, and my aunt was with us. My daughter was saying, "Whats that monkey in the corner?" It was under the table. She saw something in the casino and it scared her.

Bernadette

Yeah, I've heard...I have heard stories we call them (term withheld) and that's a Hidatsa word for little witches. I've seen horses with their manes and tails braided. I've seen that.

Jon

Well I'd say for the Little People as they call them, they give them a name, but I don't know if I can say that name. There was one time we were playing at my grandpa's place in Twin Buttes down at their old place. We were out there just playing tag, and there were a bunch of us. Anyway, one of our cousins ended up getting lost from us, and we didn't know where he went. He finally got to where we were all at by the porch because it was getting dark. Anyway, he came back, and his hair was pulled, and he had these little scratch marks on his cheek. He was crying, and he was saying that this little woman grabbed him. She jumped off the shack rooftop or whatever and grabbed him. She was pulling him toward the bushes.

So when my grandpa came out, they [sic] were asking, "What is wrong, what is wrong?" We all thought he was just trying to scare us. We thought he's just doing that because he's losing. Sure enough, our grandparents told all of us kids to get inside the house right now. Our grandpa went back to where it had happened, and he said a prayer and did some kind of sage burning thing. We were all asking our cousin what had happened to him, and we were like, show us where the scratch marks were. Sure enough, his braid thing was all tore out like it got snagged on something. We just believed this was a little lady or little old woman that tried to

pull him toward the plum bushes. So we never ever talked about it again. After that when we went back to our grandparents' place when it started getting dark. We never went out after dark, especially by the bushes. From what I remember asking my grandpa, they give them a name. From what I was told, if you're all alone on the lake shore or something and you're just thinking, they come. Because that's when you're drifting away from yourself, and it's easier for them to come in there and take you. What happens is that they play tricks on people, and they take the form of that person to lead others to come with them thinking that's that person.

One strange thing that comes to mind, once again this happened in Twin Buttes; I was down with my cousins at their house. My aunt was calling me, and she saw me on the street by myself. She opened the door, and she was calling me by my nickname and she was saying, "What are you doing? Come over here, I'm calling you." She said that I just turned around and walked into the neighbor's yard, opened up the fence gate, and walked along the house. She got after me. She said, "Why did you go across the street to the neighbor's house? Why didn't you listen to me?" She was upset. I go, "What are you talking about? I was with my cousins just right now." So that's when my uncle came and said that there was probably a spirit in the neighborhood. Somebody was doing something to make these things come. We didn't really get the whole story as to what happened but later my aunt told me that there was somebody that looked just like me. They looked at me, turned around, and walked into the neighbor's yard. They opened up the fence gate and just kept walking along the house until I was out of sight. That was really weird for my aunt to be telling that kind of story. (Little People) they're usually like an older woman, like a really old woman. Something short and really skinny. Then they come in different forms like children or they take a form of you.

Bob

I guess they say [they live] over in the village or Mandaree or Lost Bridge. I guess anywhere out on the reservation, just out in the country. I know the Little People also known as (name withheld), and I know you're not really supposed to say that name.

There the Little People, the tree witches, or the water witches. [They're] more so out toward the village. They're supposed to live out that way. Our stories about them, I guess just stories about spirits. In general, out in the country at sundances and ceremonies and things like that.

Some people say they live in the trees, or out in the cliffs by the village, or in those little caves, sandcliffs by the village. Some say they're little spirits, but they like to raise Cain. I don't know, I guess I've been told you're not supposed to be out looking for them. They're around, the older ones talk about them, and it's not really good to talk about them. I was told they're tricksters. They raise heck with you and stuff like that. They would see them or they might slap someone. I don't know if they could twist mouths or things like that. I guess if you live out in the

country, out there in your home they'll misplace things in the middle of the night. I've heard a few stories from a few friends' mothers' parents, they talk about them when they were little. When people our age or younger are trying to scare each other, it's not that scary. When you have people who are older adults that aren't trying to scare you, you listen, and you get scared because they are telling the truth.

When I was young they snuck up on us. When we were walking in the house late at night they would run by or stay in the cupboards and things like that. When the older ones spoke, you would listen and what they say was true. My sister had one actually crawling on her on her chest, and she talked about that experience like it happened last week. It's still vivid in her mind, and she hates talking about it. It happened when she was a little girl and of course I know her. There was that and just about the older ones seeing them. My uncle once said he was going out some evening or something. Those Little People were throwing rocks at him as he was down below the cliff. I think he was tying his shoe or he was resting or something, and he said that these rocks were being thrown at him from way on top. He looked up but he couldn't see anybody. Then he looked up and he could see little things running up there throwing rocks...laughing and really raising heck with him.

I think they've always been around. I hear from different tribes from different parts of the country; it always seems like they have these Little People. They have different names for them like down in South Dakota they have a park called Soutcha Park. They said those Little People down there run rampant. I guess they're in the trees and stuff. They have a name for them. I have some friends who live in Arizona and New Mexico that have Little People. They have different names for them and different stories. I think they're spirits. They're spirits. I guess the name (name withheld)...you're not supposed to mention it more than three times or something because it's like you're calling them. You're not supposed to go and find them. It's not good to find them.

I guess different people at parties would try and go and find them. They're like, "There is no such a thing," and all of a sudden they would see them in the trees or by some dumpster or something out by the village. They would see them...different ones. I think there was a guy who went to some abandoned house, and he was looking for them. They were drinking, you know...raising hell and something had happened to his face like he either got slapped or his lip got twisted. He saw them running, these Little People. They were jumping off the ledge of this window and running out to the prairie, and they were all screaming.

Eva

They said, well they said it was up in the village. Usually people see them up in the hills over there. One time a friend of mine was drinking up there. They were parked up in the hills back there, and he said that he was drinking, and he saw something run across his head lights. He saw something run across his headlights.

"What the hell was that?" You know...and he's like, "Whatever, keep drinking." It ran across again. He said it was maybe three feet tall or something and there were three of them. He said they weren't all the same, but he couldn't really tell the specific details about them. He said they were three feet tall, they had short little legs and little arms, and they had red eyes. He said he saw them running back and forth across his headlights. He didn't dare get out, so he pulled out. He said he knew they were Little People. His grandma had described them to him before, and he said it was exactly like the red eyes...really little. I think they're really beings. That's what I've always thought and heard.

April

She [her Grandma] said they can mock anything, and they can cry like babies. They can look like birds. For the most part, they're bad...they're not nice. That's just what she told me. They can imitate a lot of stuff, so a lot of times when you hear things...when you hear a baby crying and you're like, "Where is that coming from?" It's probably (name withheld) messing with you. They're tricksters, they're witches, and if they touch you, they'll put bad medicine on you. She just told me that in September.

You can kind of think of them as tricksters. Little People are tricksters too. This one time I was with my boyfriend. We were down in his room, and we were gonna go upstairs. He had really bushy hair while we were laying down. His hair was really bushy, and he was looking for his brush. We couldn't find it anywhere. We tore his room up looking everywhere, and he just wanted to find it. We were like, "Whatever...big deal we're just going upstairs." We go back downstairs for something, and that brush was sitting right on the end of his bed...just sitting there. The blankets were all messed up because we tore up the bed. We were looking everywhere, and that brush was...honest to god...it was just sitting on the end of the bed clear as day. We were like, "No way." We took off running upstairs. Stuff has happened to them in that house. They would party there and stuff a lot. That's probably why. His sister got held down in her room when she was sleeping one night. She woke up, and she couldn't move. She was trying to scream, and she couldn't. No one could hear her, and she said it lasted forever, but it was only like thirty seconds. She said it felt like it was hours.

Embala

Those witch women they talk about...I think that's among the Hidatsa. I lived in the village as a teenager near New Town and hung around with my friends' parents who were Hidatsa. I remember them telling us never to go back in those hills, and they gave several accounts of how a certain person as a kid misbehaved or raised heck and they were somehow affected by those women. Then there was this woman...a husband and wife...they lived up the road from us in the village. They were what we considered "holy roller" people. They were like really heavy into their church and prayed all the time. They said that they figured out after several occurrences that it happened between the 15th and the end of the month.

They would get this knock on the door...on their back door. Their back door faces humongous hills in the village. They said at that certain time of the month, they would get this knock on the door. After a while it became such an occurrence that they expected it. There would be short grey-looking people. They said they couldn't see too far out into the dark, but as far as you could see, there were many. They would just stand...you know expressionless. They would set food. I don't know what kind of food, but apparently it took care of them. It seemed like they expected it. I know the two old folks were pretty credible...you know in their storytelling.

Susie

I remember when I was little there was something that came to our house. I barely remember...and my dad got upset. There was a little person. He went outside and called my grandpa. They all came down and smudged. All the grown ups were talking about it. We were all in the room, and they smudged us off. We really didn't know what was going on at the time. I didn't really understand because I was young. I remember them talking about little.

Hoofman

Hoofman is a more sinister spirit that haunts a place called Lost Bridge. This bridge is no longer used, but the stories and experiences that deal with Hoofman are still abundant. Other tribes refer to such a spirit as "Deerwoman." This entity appears in the form of a man, but unsuspecting passengers later realize this man has hooves for feet. He often serves as a warning for travelers late at night: Do not pick up strangers at night!

These stories are very similar in scope, but the locations are not the same. Some respondents claim he is in Mandaree by Lost Bridge, others claim his range expands to the casino. All of the respondents seem very afraid of Hoofman, and he is something to be avoided. The respondents avoid Lost Bridge because of Hoofman. This is an excellent example of a story that serves as a warning.

It was surprising that more respondents did not know more about Hoofman. Respondents were very aware of Hoofman, but not all of the respondents had experiences or stories about him. They do believe that he exists, but this has more to do with a

collective belief rather than direct experience. This phenomenon seems more closely associated with Lost Bridge than the entity itself. One thing is clear, Hoofman is something to be avoided at all costs.

The Stories

Michael

Hoofman. People claim that in the Lost Bridge area around Mandaree...for some reason...they seem to see him there a lot. I've heard of a lot of people that knew someone or knew somebody who had seen him around that area. He was like half bull...half something...and half human. The top part of his body is human, and the bottom part he has hooves. People pick him up...they'll see a hitchhiker. The top part...he looks human for the most part so they'll pick him up. They'll get in his car. I've heard stories. Someone looked down and they saw hooves on him. Then he just disappears

Mandy

The one about the Hoofman and the Lost Bridge? I heard that story. One of our relatives saw a guy hitchhiking. It was raining out, and there was a guy with a trench coat on the side of the road. Of course, he pulled over to give him a ride, and that guy jumped in. He [the hitchhiker] would talk, and our cousin was trying to talk...you know, make conversation. That guy kind of just kept his head down. He was gonna put a tape in or do something, and he dropped it on the floor. So he turned on his dome light, and he was gonna reach down to grab that tape. Here he looked, and that guy had hooves. He said he didn't know what to do, so he just pulled over and told that guy, "You have to leave. You have to get out." That guy jumped out, and our cousin took off. He looked back and that guy was really chasing him.

Bernadette

I heard this from numerous different people that there is supposed to be this individual who lives in that area. He's gotten in with different people, and they've given this person rides. He would have hooves, and he's usually male. I can't remember exactly who told me, but we've always heard these stories. There's an old hunting lodge over there, and it's still up. My dad used to go there and stay there when they went horseback riding. They would go deer hunting, and they used to stay there at that camp. Dad would never really tell me anything, but it was other people that would. He [Hoofman] comes from that area...that old shack or cow camp. I think he kind of originates from out of there.

Jon

Yes, Hoofman. I heard a lot stories about like in the Lost Bridge area between Mandaree and Killdeer. About how this person gets picked up because they're hitchhiking. As the person gets in the car, it reveals its hooves. Then they look over and that's when they realize that person--whatever it was-- is not there not more. It goes away. From what I gather...I don't know if it's the same as the lady with no face. if that's the same person as the Hoofman. I remember different stories. There would be a glowing light following behind a car and as it got closer to the car...that's when it would like jump on back of a car...on top of the car. They would think it was a woman or man with long hair. It could be on a rainy night, and they stop and pull over to pick up this person hitchhiking. As they get closer the wind blows, and they realize that this person has no face. Then they just keep going.

Bob

Hoofman. I don't know too much about that. I think he's associated with the Lost Bridge over by Mandaree. I don't know too much about him. I know that he's part man and some sort of hoof animal. I hear stories about him. I know it's over by Lost Bridge by Mandaree. I heard a story...I heard it from a reliable someone in Four Bears Casino who was using the restroom. I guess one of the people was using the restroom, and I think the next stall over somebody came in. They were wearing like heels or something. I heard that the next stall over the person had hooves and the lady ran out screaming. I guess it was a spirit. Nobody was even in there. I heard he is at Lost Bridge jumping on cars.

Eva

I was actually a little kid, and I was walking down a dirt road from my friend's house back to my grandma's house. I it must have been maybe two in the morning because we were watching movies. I was just walking, and I heard something...like something scraping against the dirt behind me. I know that I'm not supposed to look behind me at night, but you know, you're a little kid, so you're curious. I looked behind me, and I didn't see anything...just a cloud of dust. I just kept on walking, and then I heard footsteps behind me...not really footsteps but really hard pounding behind me. I didn't want to look back, so I started running. Then it just started pounding faster and faster behind me. I finally made it to my grandma's house. It was right behind me. I looked back, and I saw the bottom half of it. It was like at the edge of the lawn. I looked behind me. The bottom half was like a deer with hooves, but the top half was a man with arms... his chest was bare, and he had like long flowing black hair that was blowing. But it wasn't even windy, and he was just staring at me with his hand pointing at me. I started crying, and I ran inside locked the door. I think it was Hoofman or something like that. I really do, because I know what I saw. A lot of times I heard it described that way. I feel like I saw him...you know...for myself. I think it's a

spirit that can manifest itself in real life and take on a real physical form and can actually do some harm. That's what I think.

Eva

During Four Bears pow wow somebody went...I can't remember who it was...I think it was...I can't specifically remember who it was...but they were telling me they went in the bathroom with their friend, and they were all drunk. They were sitting on the pot. I don't even know how long, and they hadn't realized that their friend was gone. They were sitting there talking, and then they looked down. They heard some sort of a snort. They said their friend's name, and nobody answered. They looked down and in the stall next to them, there were hooves. There were hooves pounding...not pounding you know...like scratching on the linoleum on the floor the tile. They booked it out of there.

April

I heard a lot of stories about him...Lost Bridge is where they always were. This one time...I don't remember if it was a man or a woman..but they saw somebody walking in a long dark coat, and they stopped and he got in. He was driving and the guy said, "You can drop me off right here." It was right in the middle of the bridge. He let him out, and then he looked down. His feet had hooves.

Bigfoot

Bigfoot is a phenomenon common to many American Indian tribes. Even non-American Indians claim to have seen this cryptid. Bigfoot is no stranger to Fort Berthold. In the 90s local newspapers reported that numerous residents of the Three Affiliated Tribes claimed to have seen him all over Fort Berthold. Many of the sightings were in town, and this fascinated many of the residents.

A common theme in the stories and experiences from the respondents is spirituality. All of the respondents believe that Bigfoot is a spirit. Bigfoot has different spiritual purposes, but all of the respondents claim that he is a benevolent spirit. Sometimes he scared the respondents and the respondents' friends and families, but all of the respondents agreed that Bigfoot is something to be respected and revered. It is intriguing to consider Bigfoot a spirit. Perhaps, this is why so many people claim to see him but can never prove it with physical evidence.

The respondents talked excessively of spirituality. Spirituality is a fundamental principle in their lives. They do not consider these phenomena to be paranormal or supernatural. Bigfoot, like other phenomena on Fort Berthold, is more spiritual and commonplace. This differs from the mainstream view of this phenomenon. The respondents did not feel like they had to explain any of the phenomena, because spirituality does not need to be explained. For them, it is explanation enough.

The Stories

Michael

A couple years ago...for some reason...there were a lot of sightings of Bigfoot. It was even in the newspaper. One of the ladies that saw it was a pretty trustworthy person. She said that she saw it right in her back yard, and she was trustworthy enough to where they actually put it in the paper. Not long after that, my dad was fixing fence down by the river...him and his friend. They found a giant footprint in the sand down there, and there wasn't any kind of way that a human could of [sic] made that large of a footprint. My dad believes to this day that it was Bigfoot. I've heard is that Bigfoot is not like an animal or like a human. It is more like a spirit, and that's why they haven't been able to catch him or find him. He can kind of come and go as he wants to.

Mandy

A couple of years ago we were down chasing some cows. Actually we were bringing back a calf...loading it in back of the pickup. We were down below the house by the lake. We were driving...we were in the pickup, and I looked, and I seen [sic] my uncle's dog come running. It was chasing something. There's a tree line and...this is the honest to god truth...it was above the tree line. It was brown. It was running full blast and it wasn't like a deer or antelope. It was running fast. It was level...I swear you could see it over where the tree line was. My uncle seen [sic] it. They called it a moose or antelope or something. I think we seen [sic] Bigfoot. It wasn't like an animal running or like a deer running. I think we might have seen him. I don't know...you hear different stories...you hear that he follows medicine. He's only around prayer. You hear that they migrate and travel through here. He follows the river. That's why you see him around this area by our place because of the lake. You hear that they have communities. I'm not sure, I've been spooked a lot

Bernadette

This story I'm gonna tell you is a true story that happened to me. I was approximately twenty three years old. It was in my parent's home, the home we are in right now which is like 33 years old. We were home alone. My daughter was just a baby...I'd say 12 months...and I was doing laundry downstairs. She was an infant. She was in the bedroom sleeping, and it was night time. My dad had gone into town to a meeting, so it would have to be around 7 o'clock or 8. Meetings are right around that time. I was laying on the couch in the living room, and we had a huge picture window. I was watching T.V. laying on the couch and all of a sudden I heard this...I want to say shrill...it was a scream. It was a sound I've never ever heard in my life, ever. It was right outside the window, and it was very real. I just dropped off the couch...I mean literally crawled onto the floor on my stomach.

I crawled into the first bedroom which would be this room right now. I was worried about my little girl...I just thought this is so real, it could hurt us. I crawled into the bedroom. I got my daughter and put her down on the floor. Whatever it was...was at the window. I could just visualize. I knew it wasn't human...wasn't a human being. I grabbed my little girl, and I got to the phone. I got the phone and I dialed the number where daddy was...or my dad was..and I told him, "You need to come home, dad, *now*. There's something here outside; I don't know what it is." He said, "I'll be right there." To me it seemed like hours. I didn't look out the window. I didn't do anything until my dad came and opened the door. I don't know what he seen [sic] when he came into the road which is about a mile. He seen [sic] our dogs at the cattle guard, but he didn't see anything or hear anything. I don't know what that was to this day. That's the story of the Bigfoot. That's just an experience I had.

Jon

The Big Foot stories...I didn't really hear it so much about like in the Twin Buttes area. When I was a little boy they first started talking about the Bigfoot creature thing. One night I remember distinctly...I was just young and because we were talking about these stories. My father had a ranch, and some nights we would have to go feed the cattle. One night we were going out to the field. I was asleep, and I remember I had to get up to open up the gates. I remember I was awakened by this loud noise. I remember my dad and two older cousins who were with us told me to get out of the truck and go open up the gate. I remember hearing that noise and as I opened up the gate coming I heard that big loud noise again. I thought, "It's one of those creatures," because I had no idea what a Bigfoot was. I just remember hearing that noise. Maybe it was just a bull making that mating call but this was winter.

I'm older now. I can understand why a bull wouldn't make that call. I don't know. I remember there were stories around the Halliday area about cattle being tore

[sic] open, and they couldn't explain what animal could have tore [sic] these cattle that they were finding. Then I remember... I think one of the local papers did, like, a little story. There was [sic] cattle ranchers in the Halliday area that said they saw something in front of the truck, and the smell was bad and all that.

Bob

I've heard stories from my grandfather. One story I remember. I was really little. I heard my grandfather [talking] to another elderly gentleman. I was a little kid, and I wasn't supposed to be listening. He was saying something about how they had a word for him. It wasn't Big oot, but there was some Mandan name they had for him. I knew (what) they were talking about. I guess my grandpa was out doing a sweat or something out in the country in Twin Buttes. It was by a creek, and they were doing a sweat. My grandpa had told the young gentlemen, "Don't be afraid because you'll see that creature. It's coming. He's over by the bridge, he's coming this way along the creek." Then this one gentleman in particular said, "Who's coming?" Then they used the Mandan Indian word, and they said that out in the trees they heard trees rustling. The guy told my grandpa, "I seen [sic] like green eyes or something, and it was the size of the roof of a house in the trees looking at me." The gentleman who was talking was wearing glasses. My grandpa had told him, he said, "Well, it was as scared of you as you were of him. When you were wearing the glasses and the fire was there, he was looking at you. He was curious because you had flames for eyes.

It was a spirit that was coming. There's a bridge over the creek to get to the sweat area. My grandpa told everybody not to be afraid, because he was passing by. That's something they mentioned. He was as afraid because he had flames for eyes. It was a reflection from the fire from his glasses. That Bigfoot...or I wish I knew the Mandan word for it...my grandpa said, "You know he's a spirit...you can't catch it and sometimes people will see him but he's a spirit from long ago." I was just a young one listening when I wasn't supposed to.

Eva

He [her relative] told us he had his fire set up, and he was sitting there singing and drumming. He heard this wail...it didn't really quite sound human, but it didn't really quite sound like an animal either. He just heard it wailing and screaming in the distance, and it kept getting closer and closer. He would stop for a minute, and it would wail and scream again. It just kept getting closer and closer to him, so he kept on ignoring it. He was praying and stuff, and it kept getting closer and closer.

All of a sudden he opened his eyes and he looked up and around the edge of the fire...like barely where the light was touching the outside...he looked up, and he said there was this like thing. It was really hairy and it was standing up on two feet. It was probably nine feet tall. He looked up, and it was just staring at him. It had these crazy eyes...almost human eyes. He said it was just staring at him, so he got up and got in his car. He was shaking all over, and he started speeding up.

He looked back, and it was following him. He said it ran just as fast as his car did; no matter how much he tried to speed up, it was right behind him. He said it started pounding its fists on his trunk, and then it sped up to the passenger side. It just started staring at him, and it started wailing and throwing its arms up. He just kept on going, and he said that went on for about five minutes. It would just come up next to him, stare at him, scream, and go back and pound on his trunk. He finally made it to his house. He started running, and it was running after him...chasing him. He made it to his house. When he got into his house, the wailing still continued just further away. It was screaming outside of his house all night. He is positive it is Bigfoot. He thinks it's a spirit.

Margie

I've heard that Bigfoot is supposed to...I've heard a lot of things. He's a spirit, that he comes fulfilling a prophecy. He's trying to warn the people of something. He's supposed to smell really bad. I've heard that he doesn't really, like, interact or anything. People mostly just see him, and if he sees them see him he just runs away. I don't know, some people don't believe that he's a spirit. I actually heard not to leave your garbage outside at night because that could attract the Bigfoot. He'll look in your windows. I've heard a couple stories about people looking out their windows at night and seeing Bigfoot looking in. I heard a story...it was a couple of white guys near Parshall. This was in the 50s or 60s, it might have even been in the 70s, but they were driving. [They looked] in the ditch as they were driving by...they saw him get up. They saw him stand up.

Embala

As a kid living in Bearden Valley which is in the western part of North Dakota between Mandaree and Watford city...that's our home where I grew up. It was surrounded by hills. I remember the uncles and my brothers went out to coal mine. We had our own coal mine way back in the hills. They would have to take a horse and buggy back there. They said that they had seen this very tall [creature] way back in the trees. It was tall. I don't know if it was a Bigfoot, but at the same time they got this really strong odor. I mean it was really a definite odor, and it seemed to be coming from that. Whenever they felt the presence, they would smell that.

Miscellaneous Stories

The researcher asked the respondents to share any other stories that pertained to Fort Berthold. Some of the respondents shared similar stories, but many of these stories are more personal to the individual respondent. The researcher was not aware of the lake

monster or U.F.O.s More than one respondent shared these stories, and this is something to be explored. Other stories are more well known, like the stories about Mandaree.

Respondents who shared these experiences and stories believe in the sincerity of the storyteller and their own experiences. It is puzzling, because U.F.O.s do not necessarily fit into the cultural beliefs of the Three Affiliated Tribes. One has to wonder how much of the outside world has influenced this category of story. Strange lights in the sky have been seen for years, but the notion of U.F.O.s is relatively new in terms of the history of Three Affiliated Tribes. However, validating the legitimacy of the experience is beyond the scope of this study.

Many of these miscellaneous stories deal with spirituality and experience. We can learn much from these stories. Respondents shared several aspects of their culture, such as ceremonies and taboos. Several nocturnal activities are to be avoided out of respect for the spirits. "Smudging" or burning sage or cedar is a cleansing ritual that numerous respondents spoke of. One thing is absolutely clear from these stories. These people are very spiritual and embrace the practices and traditions of their people.

The Stories

Michael

Mandaree School

There's a lot of stories about Mandaree school. There's so many people that have seen things around there...usually its like spirits. They hold a lot of funeral services in there for students who have passed away or just people in the community. I think that might have something to do with why there's so much stuff that goes on there

U.F.O.s

There's also people who see a lot of lights in the sky at night. There's stories of people being followed by them. My aunt and my grandma...they got chased by

one. They were driving home. They were almost home, and they seen [sic] this giant light come out of nowhere. They stopped, and when they stopped, it stopped. When they would speed up, it would speed up. It pretty much followed them all the way to their house, and when they got home, they ran inside. It had stopped over the garage, and it was hovering over the garage. It wasn't making any kind of sound or anything. It was just a bright light. They told my grandpa about it, and my grandpa looked out and saw it too. They think that it was a U.F.O. I don't know. I'm really not sure what it was. There's a lot that happens around there. don't know if it's military, but it does happen a lot around there.

Lake

Well, the lake. I've heard different people tell me that there's a lot of things around there...spirits. Because of the fact that that's where everyone used to live up until the 1950s. They flooded it, and there was a lot of stuff down there. A medicine man told me that he talked to some of the people who lived around the lake, and for some reason don't wear shiny things in the lake. They like those. If you wear those in there, he said they'll try to take you. You could drown or something.

Mandy

The Point

The point out by Shell Creek--it's called The Point. It's a recreation area. We had a campout there one year for the boys' and girls' club. My grandpa's brother...he's a singer [who] was there, and the kids were raising heck that night. You could just smell sweet grass...I mean it was just really strong. Our grandpa came over, and he started singing. All these spirits come and start singing with him. He told those kids, "You all need to go to bed ...this is nighttime...nighttime is for the spirits. You're not supposed to be raising heck and there's a lot of spirits around here. This is kind of a sacred spot, so you need to be quiet." He said, "Those spirits come and start singing Indian with us. They're around here, so you guys go to bed."

We grew up learning that you close your curtains. They'll be looking in at you. Spirits will be looking in at you. Don't go outside with meat grease on your lips, or they'll twist your mouth. They'll smell that meat. Don't whistle...they'll twist your mouth. My grandpa used to say, "If you hear somebody say your name and you're by yourself, don't ever look at them...don't ever turn around and look at them or your hair will turn white." What it came down to is being respectful and not making a bunch of noise at night. I don't know if that went back to the day when we had to be quiet...when people were getting raided. That was a scare tactic. I've seen people who aren't there before, so I believe that there is a whole

other realm. A spiritual world, and that they're among us. If you're messing around they're gonna let you know. I totally believe that.

Bakersville

Bakersville...of course, you know there's a burial ground. They say all those homes are built on graves. People get messed with over there, because they disturb those bones. They knew that when they built that place, but they tried to keep it hush hush. A lot of weird things happen. I walked into my auntie's house before and had stuff turn on that shouldn't be turned on. It's just kind of crazy. Bakersville area...that's where my friends got attacked by those Little People. That's where they lived...right there.

Bernadette-Bakersville

There's a place here called Bakersville and it used to be a golf course. When they excavated they found bones so it's probably a burial ground. I have a sister that lives there and different family members have rented her log cabin. They've experienced things happening there and it's spooky. I've never experienced it. My sister in law whose non-indian stayed there and she went through a lot of trying times...hearing things and there would be nothing there and people knocking on the door or window and nobody's there. They see these Little People in that area.

Jon

Lost Bridge

They apparently built this bridge and as the people were making the highway, they misplaced where they had built the bridge. There's actually a creek, a river that runs underneath that bridge, and there's like a little campground in that area. That's where a lot of activity happens. People can't explain things. People who don't hear the stories...they go camping or fishing, and they hear things. They'll hear growling.

I remember my cousin was telling me they hear, like, little kids laughing. They said they heard children laughing, and they talk about how they see glowing eyes. I remember hearing stories that people lost their lives traveling in those Badlands. Roads get windy, and those cliffs are very steep. I've heard people drove off because of the conditions of the road. I remember one incident where a truck driver had lost his head, and they couldn't find the head of the victim. I remember there's stories like that.

Grandpa's House

Our great grandpa's house is still up...down in a coulee. We just call it old man [name emitted] place. I guess at nighttime...you can probably go there at anytime, and you'll see flint being rubbed together. You can see that inside this abandoned house on the second floor in those windows and around that area. I don't stick around long enough to like see. We're like, "What is that?" And we all take off running. We have a medicine man in our family. He said the spirits will come and tell him that they're angry because people are doing bad things or in an area they're not supposed to be in.

Number 8

In Twin Buttes there's Number 8 stories. There's a road that used to connect a bridge between Twin Buttes and Highway eight by Parshall. Way before it was flooded. The highway leads right into the water now, and a lot stories come from that area. A lot of them are about the Little People. The end of this highway became a, like, hangout for people to go and party. That's where a lot of the stories would happen.

This person will be in the back of their car as they're leaving. That's what would cause some of these accidents. These people would fly off the coulee because they're startled by this visitor in their car. I guess there was one person that actually did say that as he was leaving that area, he looked in his rear view mirror...he saw this woman or elderly woman which we all believed to be that Little Person. That's what caused him to go off in the coulee when he wrecked. He lay there with the car on top of him. I remember him telling a lot of us about what happened. Then we all started to believe it more and more because here was somebody who wouldn't just say things. They closed that road off now. No one goes down there. It's not even considered an option to even go and even party anymore. Too many strange things were happening over the years. I think people my age started realizing "Hey, maybe there's a message here."

Lost Bridge

One story I heard about was at the old Four Bears bridge. Some guy had fallen into one of those pillars. They couldn't stop pouring the cement, so they buried him alive. There's a catwalk underneath that old bridge, and this man would roam that. People would go down there or be around that bridge area late at night when it got dark. They said they would see somebody walking on the catwalk, and they would think it was that guy. They would just see somebody walking the cat walk.

Big Turtle

They say there's big snapping turtles in there. I remember one time one of our cousins was telling this story about how there was this turtle that came, and it took away people who are lazy. Either they do really foolish things in the water not respecting the water. This turtle supposedly would come, and it would take them or drown them. One story that I heard...I don't know if it was just a

warning...don't be doing stupid things while you're in the water or be drinking or eating. Some say it's the size of a car hood.

Bob

Lost Bridge

Lost Bridge: It's over by Mandaree toward Killdeer and the little Missouri River. Some say it wasn't suppose[d] to be there...it's by some sacred land. I don't know if it was Sundance ground or some sort of burial ground. It wasn't a good place. I don't know if there was a bad entity, or if something happened there. They said that it wasn't supposed to be put there. Different people said they would go to the bridge late at night or pass by, and they would get a weird feeling. Especially in the evenings. Nobody wanted to go that way, and of course if you had to go around it, you would have to go by Garrison, and that's like hours and hours. Sometimes we had to go through there and just the road itself was really bad. The road even now a days is really rugged. The bridge is falling down now. We have a newer bridge.

The old Lost Bridge had like the railings above it, and people said that things would fall on the roof, or there might be things on the road. A dog or coyote would be chasing it or chasing the car. One time there was a wolf...they thought it was a white dog. One story I heard...they looked back; the dog got up and was chasing them. Then it wasn't a dog it, wasn't a coyote. They thought it might be more like a wolf or something. The other story was that a station wagon was going through and something jumped on the station wagon. It made a really bad noise on the car. Somebody said there were scratch marks when she got it back home. They thought it might have been a run-over animal where it scratched the top of her car, but there would be much more. Some say when they drive across Lost Bridge they would look in their rear view mirror, and they would see somebody sitting in the back seat.

There was a non-Indian who actually broke down not far from the Lost Bridge. He was walking...he thought he could walk this road. He came to a country house. An older woman told him it was too late for him to be walking this road late at night. There are things around you shouldn't be near. By the Lost Bridge there was an old house that collapsed. The story goes that this man, this non-Indian was taken to this house. She invited him in. It was a nice house; it was kind of like a log cabin. He went in there and she made a fire. He ate there, and she told him it would be safer to leave later in the morning. There's a lot of truckers and traffic early in the morning. It was better when it was light out. She had said something like the night belongs to them...the night belongs to the spirits. So this non-Indian didn't know better. He said the lady had great hospitality. The next day he went back, and he got his car when it was light out. Some trucker came by and helped him with his vehicle. He wanted to thank this old lady, but

when he stopped in the nearest town, this guy started laughing, "There's no house there. There is an old collapsed abandoned one." When that guy went back, he said the house was an old abandoned house. Not all bad things happen, because this lady was like an angel I guess.

Out in the Country

Out in the country where I stayed, it was way out in the boonies like 20 miles south from town. There are certain things you're not supposed to do. One thing is, you're not supposed to eat at night or go outside and eat in the dark. You're not supposed to look outside when it's nighttime. You're not supposed to whistle at nighttime, because they said you're calling the spirits. I was told you're not supposed to scream or holler because you're calling the spirits. You're not supposed to be out at night. You're not supposed to look outside the window when it's nighttime.

When I was younger, we would always try to go out and try to find ghost cars or scary places out in the country and try to scare each other. You weren't supposed to do things like that. They said you weren't supposed to be out in the country on the roads away from home at night by yourself because spirits will follow you. They said that's their time, the night time is their time to be. When I was a little kid, I was watching little ones. Out in the country there's gravesites all around, and no one knows where these grave sites are. A lot of people were buried in shallow graves. A lot of graves were out on the prairie, and some graves were marked but aren't marked anymore. At nighttime there might be spirits. If you look out, they may look back at you.

One time my nieces and nephews were trying to scare each other, and one of them looked outside out the window. There was a little girl looking back at him, and he screamed. My uncle had to go out and offer some food and some tobacco. There was a little girl buried a few hills from us, and sometimes she'll get hungry. She'll show herself, so my uncle would have to go out and feed tobacco or leave some food at her grave. Now that we're older, we understand.

My uncle got mad at them, because they were trying to provoke. That's one thing you're not supposed to do. Sometimes they say if you go out in the country walking or be careful where you go. We have these things called sage and cedar and sweet grass. You're supposed to take off your shoes before you come inside and smudge yourself off with cedar, because you don't know where you've been. Something could follow you back, or you might bring something back that's not supposed to be there.

Lake

I know about the water below the bridge. A lot of people have drowned in there...a lot of people have passed away. A lot of people from Fort Berthold passed away whether by drinking or some committed suicide off the bridge. I

heard of an elder who tried to feed the spirits or pray or do something with the water. I guess there were a lot of spirits or a lot of people who had passed in that lake. She said she saw a lot them ...hundreds of them. Just like spirits. It wasn't like the actual form of them, but she said she seen them. She said there's a lot of praying that needs to be done for them. They need tobacco, because a lot of people lost their lives. She felt sorry for them.

Mandaree

I've only been in Mandaree a few times. I've never really been out there. It's like way out of the way of everything. I don't know...you hear a lot of scary stories. I know of a spiritual leader who had to go out there a few times. He's kind of well known back home. He's traveled all over the country. He doesn't like to be called a medicine man, and he likes to help people. Anyway, he had to go out to Mandaree a few times to help pray for some families. He usually has some sons or helpers go with him. They went to Mandaree, and he said that he was pretty surprised at what kinds of things are out there.

He said he was coming up to a house out in the country, and his boys opened up the gate so they could pass through. They said they were waiting, and they heard things in the bushes by the truck. They thought they were coyotes, but as they closed the gate and passed through...those dogs were all around the car as they were passed through. These dogs had faces on them, human faces. He said they were bad spirits, and they said they were in the bushes along the car. He said they were trying to scare us so we couldn't help these people this family up on the hill. He said there are a lot things in Mandaree like that. That was pretty hard to hear because it came from an elder.

The Little Old Man

There's another story over by the White Shield area. There's a road that takes you to Bismarck. It's a short cut, a back road. I know of an older lady who had told me that when she was she was younger, they had those old station wagons when they were in style everybody on the rez. She was telling us kids a story, because we were all trying to scare each other. She was saying, "You really shouldn't talk about things like that if it's night, because you're provoking. It's not good. I can tell you a story about when I was going to nursing school. I was coming back late, and I was taking that short cut." She passed what she thought was a dog on the road. As she drove, she got closer. he said it was a little bald man, a little white man. He was kneeling down tying his shoe.

She drove by him, and she looked in her rear view mirror. She could see him running after the car. She said she was going faster and that thing in the rearview mirror was coming closer catching her. She looked back and she didn't see him anymore, so she kind of slowed down and right when she slowed down, she said she heard the back door handle flipping. She looked, and she saw that little monopoly man running beside her car trying to open up the back door. She said

[she] really got scared, [and] she said she floored it. She looked in the rearview mirror, and the little old man was slowly fading in the distance.

Mandaree

I've heard that security guards are there (Mandaree High School) all night, and they have cameras in there. A lot of times they sit in there, and they see people in the middle of the night roaming the halls. They'll be there one minute and disappear the next. They hear banging all the time in the middle of the night, especially in the gym. They hear things being thrown around, and they hear screams. They usually see one woman that just walks around a specific hall, and she'll just disappear. This guy told me that he was sitting there, and he was watching it. She was. Like. walking and all of a sudden she turned around and looked straight at the camera. She was just staring at it, and then she turned around and kept on walking.

There were lots of battles fought there, and there were a lot of bad things that happened around Mandaree historically. I think the spirits are still wandering around without any other place to go, because there was so much bad stuff that happened that they got stuck. There's a hill there in Mandaree that supposedly goes way back during the wars when we were getting pushed on reservations. There was a warrior who was on his horse with probably 30 others. They were surrounded by 300 white soldiers. They ran them up on a hill, and they died up there. They just starved, because they surrounded them, and they couldn't get water...they couldn't get food. People say they've seen a guy on a horse just sitting there with no shirt on, with bow and arrows.

The House in Mandaree

My auntie was telling me she was on her way back from a business trip really late at night. I guess her car broke down. There was a big white house on the side of the road, so she stopped, and she walked back up the highway because she remembered seeing that house. So, she went up to it and, she was, like, "Can I use your phone? Would that be okay?" It was a normal house, it had furniture and paint on the walls. It was a normal house, and she went in and used the phone. She called my uncle. She got a ride home from him. He picked her up at her car, because she walked back to her car. He's like, "Where did you call me from..you know where were you['re] at?" "Oh there's a house up the road somebody let me use their phone." He's like, "Nobody's lived there for the past fifty years." They drove back up there and all the windows were smashed out and boarded up. They went in and the house was empty. Nobody had been living there. It was all run down, there were cobwebs everywhere. There was nothing there. You could tell nobody had been living there for a really long time.

The House in New Town

We lived in a house in town in New Town. There were multiple times when I would hear my name being called in the middle of the night. I would wake up, [and] I would feel something sitting on my bed. There would be an indentation, and I could feel a presence...a dark heavy presence. I would always wake up in the middle of the night, because I heard something saying my name and a lot of times. I would look up and there would be an orb of light up in the corner...always in the same spot up in the upper right corner across from my bed.

There was another time when we were all staying over night telling scary stories. Me and some of my family were telling scary stories, and all of sudden we heard the cupboard open and close really hard. Then we heard a door open and slam. That door just slammed shut. There was no wind there. It just closed like somebody pulled it shut. We heard really weird things like banging and somebody walking around. That went on for 30 minutes; because we were scared it felt like forever. My dad came home, and he was acting really weird. He went to go open the basement door, and he paused for a minute like he felt something. He stood there just looking at it, then he opened the door. He looked down into the basement, and he seemed really hesitant to go downstairs. I feel like there's definitely something in there. I feel like there's spirits in there. I don't know what they're trying to do...what they're trying to say. I don't feel like they're good. I was always scared in this house and I felt like something was terrorizing us.

April

Lost Bridge

A lot of stories occur by Lost Bridge. There's one about one of my family member's friend. They got back from Pennsylvania. He broke down right before the bridge. There's a house that was all perfect. The lights were on and everything. He walked over there and asked to use the phone. Some older man answered the door. He said that it was an old- time phone, ,and he called his grandma and grandpa. He told them where he was and everything, and my grandpa knew immediately where it was. The next day they went and got him and when he went back, the house was all broken down again.

The Man in the House

This happened right after my mom had my little brother. She saw this man walk by her bedroom, and he had black braids. He was dressed normal, and he was a native guy. The second night he actually came in the room, and he held her above the bed. She was screaming, and no one could hear her. My dad was laying there, and he didn't hear her. He really bothered her bad. A guy who lived right behind us in a trailer said that some man would be in their house all the time too. She [my mom] talked to my uncle, and he told her that while a woman is pregnant or right after she has her baby, spirits are attracted to them.

One night I was sleeping in my room. My room was way at the end of the hall way. I heard scratching at my door, and we had no animals or anything. I was like, "What was that?" I looked around, and there was nothing there. I heard it in the entryway. I looked in the kitchen, and I was getting really scared. I could hear it everywhere, and I freaked out. I banged on my parents' door, and they didn't let me in. They were, like, "go to bed." I was so scared...I closed my door. I covered my head up and I fell asleep

The most recent thing that happened to me was at our new house. I was sleeping one night, and in the middle of the night I got thirsty. I go up stairs and get a drink of water. I went to open my door, and it just closed behind me like somebody closed it, and I turned and looked and there was just like a dark shadow. It was like a person. I think it was a man and he said, "Lets play a game...you hit that wall and I'll hit this wall." I got in my bed and covered my head. The next day I told my brother, and he went to the house and smudged it. Every once in a while my dad says that these shadows walk in the hallway or they can hear something moving around out in the entryway.

Bakersville

They say Bakersville is like a cemetery, and that's why so much happens in that small area. One time me and my friend were in her house. We were up talking really late one night. We heard something in his basement...this huge noise and all these doors had fallen down. There's nothing down there...there's no wind...there's nothing. I don't know how all these huge doors would fall down. We were pretty freaked out by that. All kinds of little things would happen. One time we put food on a plate, and we took it up there [Bakersville.] This was like at three in the morning. No one's out driving. Then we went back at sunrise. The coke was empty, and there was nothing on the plate. So much stuff happens there. That's what they say. I believe when you offer spirits something, they take it.

Margie

Mandaree

We used to go to Mandaree sometimes. We used to go to Lost Bridge before we knew any better. We'd park on Lost Bridge. One night we were on Lost Bridge, and we parked. We got out and there were two car loads...there were a whole bunch of us. My friend who was sitting next to me got really scared. She said she saw a guy, he had a fur coat on. That's how she described it. His feet were hanging off the other end of the bridge, and he was just sitting on the end of the bridge. We got out and we were just kind of hanging out on the bridge messing around. Someone stomped on the bridge three times from underneath the bridge. Somebody banged from the underside of the bridge three times. We were looking over the side of the bridge underneath. There was nothing under there.

Then my other friend heard war whooping. We heard a couple war whoops, but they were really far in the distance. Then we started hearing the leaves cracking like somebody was walking toward the bridge. I wandered off by myself toward one end of the bridge, and I heard like a snorting...kind of like a bull. Like when it's about to charge, and that's when I got really scared and I ran back to everybody.

Mandaree

In Mandaree there's supposed to be places along that highway. I guess people see an abandoned house, or people see houses that'll have lights on. People will be living there, and they'll go back the next day, and the house will be abandoned. We were in Mandaree one time, and we thought we saw a house like that...that had lights on. We weren't sure, so we tried to drive up to it. We were trying to get up to that house, and there was a barn before we got to that house. We had to park and walk up the hill because the car wouldn't make it. As we were passing this barn...it was really dilapidated, and it didn't have a front and a back wall. It just had two side walls and a roof. You could see inside it from the road. There wasn't anything in there.

We were walking by to get to the house...we weren't even concerned with the barn. We heard the whole barn shake, and we got scared. We ran away, and we thought it was probably an animal or something. It started shaking again, except for this time we heard like a man's voice inside. We were trying to figure out where this voice was coming from. Somebody was kicking or hitting the side of the barn so that the walls would shake. Then there was screaming. Every once in awhile we hear, "Ow...it hurts...help...oh, my God." We decided there were no other houses, and it wasn't coming from anywhere else. It wasn't an animal. That was the barn that somebody hung himself in. People say that he kind of went crazy. He started isolating himself, and he was trying to get help from people and nobody would help. He hung himself in the barn.

Bakersville

Our family has a house in Bakersville that different people live in. Stuff's always happening there. One story in particular...my auntie was pregnant, and they were living there. She was sleeping in her bedroom with her husband, and they say spirits really like pregnant women. She was sleeping back there, and she said that she woke up and she saw a man outside her room. He was standing in the doorway, and he was watching her. He had a war bonnet on and [was] like really traditionally dressed. She woke up, and she saw him. She tried to wake up her husband. It started walking in towards her, and she said it was like she was in a bubble. She was yelling and screaming...trying to get her husband's attention. He didn't hear her.

Embala

U.F.O.s

We used to always think that where we lived in Bear Den was almost like an intersection or something for them (U.F.O.s). At certain times of the month you could see some visual sign on a U.F.O. We were all home alone. I was probably 9 and the oldest of us would have been about 18. There was a whole bunch of us kids...I don't know about 9 or 10 or us that were home. The grandparents and parents were gone. It was probably about 10 o'clock at night. We were all in the living room.

All of a sudden, the electricity went out, and of course the older kids started telling spook stories. They told us spook stories, then we all got scared. Then we all dashed to one corner of the room, and my older sister threw a blanket over all of us. All of a sudden, it was like daylight...you could see outside the blanket. It was like daylight, so everybody come out of the blanket. We thought it was the grandparents coming in. I mean it was brighter...it was just like if you looked outside, but it was late at night. The older kids went out onto the porch, and they said it was just like a beam over our yard.

That was the one time I was actually there and witnessed that. Then there were several others that my parents saw at that time of the month. Then the other thing they would see...the older kids...I was never up late at night when they came back from the neighbors on horseback. and they said they were surrounded by hills and massive fireballs. There wouldn't be many...there would be one massive one. They would all ride to where they'd seen it, and never once did they find anything burned.

Lake Monster

The other story on Fort Berthold that's pretty well known is that there is a lake monster in the lake. The two old people that told us are pretty credible. It was a time before New Town had running water and it was two bridges ago. We got the new bridge prior to that old bridge that they just replaced. There was another one. People would go down and would pick up water. Mr. and Mrs. [name withheld] were a young couple. It was early in the morning...you could see your breath in the morning. She said they went down there, and she said they went down there filling up their cans. They weren't paying attention...didn't hear a sound...didn't see anything at all.

Then there it was...just out of the water. The closest they could resemble it to was a horse head. It was just looking straight ahead...not necessarily at them. It was huge and the nostrils were huge. There was steam coming out of its nose, and her husband was telling her to back up...get back into the car. He was picking up mud balls and throwing them at him. It didn't flinch at all, even though the mud balls

were landing around it. That was probably back in the early 60s when they seen [sic] that.

Then in the late 80s some friends of mine from Trenton came down for the New Town pow wow. They had their stand. They came down on a Wednesday night and set up. They spent time down by the water. A few of them then ran a boat, and the others were sitting up on Sanish Hill not too far up. They were all in contact with each other. The people on Sanish Hill literally seen [sic] this big thing coming toward their boat.

Summary

Chapter I provided an explanation for the selected stories and experiences. This chapter also provided a brief discussion of the terms “paranormal” and “supernatural,” and why they were chosen. The chapter concluded with the purpose, need, and significance of this study.

Chapter II was a comprehensive literature review. Three interrelated concepts were vital to this study. These interrelated concepts were the American Indian oral tradition, narrative theory, and paranormal beliefs.

Chapter III contained the rationale as to why the researcher chose narrative qualitative interviewing. Next, there was a discussion about participant selection and participant profiles. Data analysis concluded the chapter

Chapter IV presented the contemporary stories of the paranormal or supernatural as told by members of the Three Affiliated Tribes. Chapter V is an overview of the findings of the study. Five themes emerged based on evidence from the ten participants. Chapter VI contains conclusions, a discussion of the study, and recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER V

THEMES AND SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

The purpose of this particular narrative study was to discover the stories' origin and meaning. It was also important to learn how these stories differ from mainstream stories of the paranormal or supernatural, and how they relate to traditional American Indian customs, beliefs, and values. Finally, the researcher wanted to learn if the respondents believe in these stories of the paranormal or supernatural. Intricate patterns emerged that give new insight to Walter Fisher's narrative theory. The following five themes emerged from three categories: fidelity, origin, and spirituality.

Introduction

This particular chapter emphasizes five themes that emerged from the respondents' experiences and stories. The respondents' quotes and stories provide the supporting evidence for each of the five themes. Based upon analysis of the data, the following five themes emerged:

Theme one: Research participants believe in the stories and experiences because of their values, traditions, and language.

Theme two: Research participants believe in the stories and experiences because they come from family and elders.

Theme three: These stories and experiences originated from tribal beliefs.

Theme four: Research participants consider these stories spiritual rather than paranormal or supernatural.

Theme five: Research participants consider these stories as warnings, taboos, and lessons.

Theme One and Supporting Evidence

Research participants believe in the stories and experiences because of their values, traditions, and language.

Members of the Three Affiliated Tribes have a unique culture that has developed over the centuries. Fort Berthold comprises three different tribes: the Mandan, Hidatsa, and Arikara. Each of the individual tribes has their own values, traditions, and language. However, many members of the Three Affiliated Tribes belong to one, two, or all three of these tribes. For example, Bernadette is a member of the Mandan and Hidatsa tribes.

Fisher asserts that listeners will believe in stories, if the stories resonate with their values, traditions, and language (1978, 1984, 1987). Some respondents admit that non-tribal members would probably think they were “crazy,” if they heard these stories and accounts. These stories and experiences may seem illogical and fantastic, but the respondents believe in these stories and experiences. Fisher’s notion of fidelity is supported by quotations and story segments from respondents.

Many of the respondents share a traditional language with their tribe or tribes. Language is an important aspect of culture. The phenomena on Fort Berthold are given traditional terms, and this reinforces a shared belief among tribal members. The term for Little People is sacred, and it would be disrespectful to reveal it here. According to Bernadette, “Yeah...I’ve heard stories. We call them [name withheld] and that’s a Hidatsa word for little witches. I’ve seen horses with their mane and tail braided.”

Like many of the other respondents, April was aware of the word for the Little People, and she shared the traditional word with the researcher. “Okay...um...[American Indian word for Little People]...she said what they do is they can mock anything, and they can cry like babies, they can look like birds. For the most part they’re bad.”

Bernadette continued by discussing the importance of storytelling. Storytelling is an integral aspect of cultural life in American Indian homes on Fort Berthold. "...actual life experiences we had experienced growing up in a Native American home. I was always taught through storytelling..." This coincides with Walter Fisher's narrative theory. He also believed that storytelling is a fundamental aspect of culture.

It is unfortunate that the beautiful eclectic culture of the American Indian has been reduced to the cliches that most people associate with Pow Wows. Traditional Singing that goes along with traditional drumming is an important American Indian tradition to American Indians. When Eva was told a story about Bigfoot, she could identify with the speaker. "He told us he had his fire set up and he was sitting there singing and drumming..." Bigfoot is a spiritual entity, and he was attracted to the power of the drumming and singing. This is a common theme in many of the stories.

Eva heard these stories growing up, so she had a frame of reference for the experiences she has had on Fort Berthold. "I think we see a collective sort of sense of tradition, because we hear about these things growing up." This coincides with Fisher's narrative theory, because values and traditions are highly persuasive. All of these respondents are from Fort Berthold, and share many traditions, values, and beliefs.

A common tradition is the practice of "smudging" something to ward off evil or cleanse a person or location. This is done with cedar or sweetgrass, and an elder or knowledgeable person does it. April had a negative experience in her home, and she knew that a person would need to "smudge" the house to ward off the evil. "I told my brother, and he went to the house, and he, like, smudged it all out." Many respondents

share this belief. This is similar to having a Catholic priest bless a person or a residence. "Smudging" is a well-known purification of evil spirits or an unclear psyche.

Susie is also familiar with the act of "smudging." She recalls a terrifying event with the Little People. The only way her elder could calm her and the Little People was by "smudging." "I remember when I was little there was something that came to our house. I barely remember...and my dad got upset. There was a Little Person. He went outside and called my grandpa. They all came down and smudged..."

Another respondent recalled the power of "smudging." Jon's experience was very similar to the others. After a negative experience, his grandfather burned some sage.

According to Jon,

So when my Grandpa came out they were asking, "What is wrong? What is wrong?" We all thought he was just trying to scare us. We thought, he's just doing that because he's losing. Sure enough, our grandparents told all of us kids to get inside the house right now. Our grandpa went back to where it had happened, and he said a prayer and did some kind of sage-burning thing.

Another practice shared by members of the Three Affiliated Tribes is the practice of leaving offerings for spirits. Usually, food or tobacco are the most common items left for the spirits.

According to Eva,

One time we put food on a plate and we took it up there [Bakersville.] This was like at three in the morning. No one's out driving. Then we went back at sunrise. The Coke was empty, and there was nothing on the plate. So much stuff happens there. That's what they say. I believe when you offer spirits something, they take it.

Leaving offerings for the spirits is a common theme in numerous respondents' stories and experiences. This is a fascinating tribal belief and custom. Many of the items left for the spirits are common items found in everyday interactions. One respondent left Coke, while another respondent's uncle left tobacco and food. "There was a little girl

buried a few hills from us, and sometimes she'll get hungry. She'll show herself, so my uncle would have to go out and feed tobacco or leave some food at her grave. Now that we're older, we understand."

Historically, a declaration of war was signaled though "whooping." This is well known on Fort Berthold and can still be heard at traditional ceremonies. Margie was aware of the significance of "whooping," but she heard it in a location devoid of people. This was unsettling, and it made Margie think of spirits from a historical time. "We heard a couple war whoops, but they were really far in the distance. Then we started hearing...um...the leaves, because this was like in October."

Margie reminded the researcher about the significance of the land. All of the respondents have strong tribal beliefs associated with the land. This familiarity and reverence accounts for the shared beliefs in these stories and experiences:

Tribal members have really strong ties to the land, and to, you know, where they live. So, they're more in tune with everything that's going on around them. I think they can perceive things more clearly than maybe someone who's a non-tribal member.

Many experiences and stories surround sacred places and ceremonies. One thing is absolutely certain, one must never tread upon these sacred locales or be disrespectful. "I wouldn't recommend it. You're not supposed to go where anything is sacred. Old sundance grounds...holy grounds...you're not supposed to go there." This is another common theme among the respondents. There are many unmarked graves on Fort Berthold, and the ones that are marked are supposed to be respected. Antagonizing or provoking spirits is the ultimate taboo.

Bob recalled what happens when somebody walks in the country. Spirits could be brought back by treading upon these sacred places. The only way to safeguard oneself is by "smudging" the people involved:

Sometimes they say if you go out in the country walking or be careful where you go. We have these things called sage and cedar and sweet grass. You're supposed to take off your shoes before you come inside and smudge yourself off with cedar, because you don't know where you've been. Something could follow you back, or you might bring something back that's not supposed to be there.

Numerous stories and experiences occurred by a sweat or during a sweat ceremony. "...I guess my grandpa was out doing a sweat or something out in the country in Twin Buttes. It was by a creek and they were doing a sweat..." A sweat lodge can be created in many ways. However, most sweat lodges are made of animal skin. The lodge is built out of wood and can be easily moved. The goal of a sweat lodge is to make the interior as hot as possible. This allows for the participants to enter a dream-like state for clarity or to enhance visions. It is a very sacred tribal belief and custom.

Michael explained how this belief in American Indian ceremonies and spirits allows for members of the Three Affiliated Tribes to believe in stories and experiences that would seem paranormal or supernatural. "In the Native American culture we have people that talk to the spirits. I mean that could be the same in others [cultures], you know, but we have different ceremonies and stuff. Non-natives don't." Many respondents differentiated between tribal members and non-tribal members. A belief in these stories and experiences is commonplace among many members who were raised traditionally.

Respondents discussed how many people are stripped of their traditional culture by mainstream beliefs and values. Mandy believes that American Indians believe in these

stories and experiences because many American Indians are still close to their traditional ways:

I think as Indians we are still closer to that side. We weren't stripped of our ways as much as a lot of non-Indians. They don't have that core...you know where they really came from. They have stories like that over in England and all those different places. I think non-Indians around here don't have that...we still have our culture.

Susie's interview reinforces the claim that Walter Fisher's notion of fidelity is a mitigating reason why many of these respondents believe in these stories and experiences. "I would say the Native American stories are believable, because we as a people see things and know the other way. I don't think that is their culture [non-Indians]." Non-Indians may not believe in these stories and experiences, because they may not be familiar with the storyteller's culture.

Theme Two and Supporting Evidence

Research participants believe in the stories and experiences, because they come from family and elders.

This theme was particularly prevalent in the interviews and subsequent stories. Respondents identified numerous family members and elders. Their strong familial ties were an important factor in their belief systems. They believed in these stories and experiences because of their strong ties to their families and elders. In addition to the respondents' culture, family and elders were just as important in solidifying their beliefs in these stories and experiences of the paranormal or supernatural.

Another aspect of Walter Fisher's Narrative theory is the importance of the storyteller. Credibility can be determined by many things, but family and trusted friends are perhaps the most credible. This is particularly true with many American Indian tribes. It is well-known that American Indian cultures value families and elders. The researcher

found that this reverence for families and friends was a crucial factor in why these research participants believed in these stories and experiences.

There was an outbreak of Bigfoot sightings on Fort Berthold. Police and the local newspaper were even involved. It was reported that the creature was spotted in several locations. Some people claimed that Bigfoot even peeked into windows, scaring the inhabitants half to death. Many off the reservation treated this as a joke or farce. However, many members of the Three Affiliated Tribes believe in Bigfoot. All of the respondents shared a story or an experience about Bigfoot.

Bigfoot was spotted in town, but all of the respondents shared experiences or stories of Bigfoot in the country somewhere. Michael remembered hearing his father talk about an experience he had with Bigfoot:

A couple of years ago, for some reason, there were a lot of sightings of Bigfoot, and it was even in the newspaper. One of the ladies that saw it...she was a pretty trustworthy person, and she said that she saw it in her backyard. They actually put it in the newspaper. Not too long after that, my dad was fixing fence down by the river. He was with a friend, and they found a large footprint that he believes was from Bigfoot.

Mandy's grandpa taught her about the significance of storytelling, and some of the etiquette involved in American Indian storytelling. "My Grandpa used to...this is the time of year when they could tell stories, like creation stories. He always told me that creation stories and the bible were alike, you know. Of course we didn't have stuff written down...we were completely oral, you know, how we told things." Some stories can only be told certain times of the year. Other stories are told primarily at night to scare the listeners.

Mandy is aware that some people do not believe in these stories and experiences. Catholicism was introduced to members of the Three Affiliated Tribes, and sometimes the beliefs contradict each other:

I think most of our elders believe. A lot of it is lost on some people here. I know a lot of people that don't believe that way. They'll laugh at you if you think you saw something or you heard something. I think it's where they lived themselves. They weren't taught or raised that way. I think it all depends on how you were raised...

Many respondents have intriguing theories about Bigfoot. Jon's grandfather told him many stories about Bigfoot growing up. "I remember my grandpa telling me one time that these aren't scientific theories. I remember my Grandpa telling me that these are spirits, and they come around to warn people. From what I gather, they're messengers for something. I think people who are spiritual guides or whatever." This belief that Bigfoot is a spirit is common among the respondents. This is in stark contrast that Bigfoot is the "missing link," a primate that has been unknown for decades.

Jon was told many stories by his elders, and he has also experienced many unexplainable phenomena on Fort Berthold. He has a strong belief in the stories and experiences, because of what his elders and family told him. "My aunts, who are a lot older than me...you know...they've heard these stories. Of course, they understand these things, because their elders told them. A lot of it was that they are spirits; I guess they're always around us." This is very similar to what the other respondents believe.

Little People are often referred to as tricksters or pranksters. Jon has a strong relationship with his family and the elders on Fort Berthold. Most of what he knows about Little People comes from his elders:

They're around, the older ones talk about them and it's not really good to talk about them. I was told they're tricksters. They raise heck with you and stuff like that. They would see them or they might slap someone. I don't know if they could twist mouths or things like that. I guess if you live out in the country, out there in your home they'll misplace things in the middle of the night. I've heard a few stories from a few friends mother's parents, they talk about them when they were little. When people are age or younger are trying to scare each other, it's not that scary. When you have people who are older adults that aren't trying to scare you, you listen, and you get scared because they are telling the truth.

Many respondents remember listening to their elders and family members as children. These stories must have deeply impacted the respondents, because they remember these stories and experiences in vivid detail. That is the power of storytelling, and this confirms many of Walter Fisher's beliefs about storytelling. Storytelling is a powerful tool.

Bob recalls an incident involving his uncle. His uncle was harassed by what he believes were Little People:

...There was that and just about the older ones seeing them. My uncle once said he was going out some evening or something. Those little people were throwing rocks at him as he was down below the cliff. I think he was tying his shoe or he was resting or something, and he said that these rocks were being thrown at him from way on top. He looked up, but he couldn't see anybody. Then he looked up, and he could see little things running up there throwing rocks...laughing and really raising heck with him...

Bob also overheard his grandfather talking about Bigfoot to an acquaintance.

Even though he overheard this conversation, he still believed in the story because of the storyteller:

I've heard stories from my grandfather. One story I remember. I was really little. I heard my grandfather [talking] to another elderly gentleman. I was a little kid, and I wasn't supposed to be listening. He was saying something about how they had a word for him. It wasn't Bigfoot, but there was some Mandan name they had for him. I knew [what] they were talking about. I guess my grandpa was out doing a sweat or something out in the country in Twin Buttes.

Another respondent recalled a house that is supposed to be inhabited by spirits. "My sister in law who is non-Indian stayed there, and she went through a lot of trying times...hearing things and there would be nothing there and people knocking on the door or window and nobody's there. They see these little people in that area." It is intriguing to note that this relative is non-Indian, but she is deemed credible. The sister-in-law is a relative, and this is enough to determine credibility.

Many of these stories were passed down from generation to generation. One respondent also shared that she will pass these stories and experiences on to her own offspring. "We grew up...how do you want to say it...it's generational. You know a lot of it's true, because I'm in my fifties, and those stories were told for a reason. I can be telling those stories to my kids...life experiences we've gone through." This is a demonstration of how storytelling works. It is passed on from family member to family member or close friend. Credibility is determined by numerous factors, including the relationship of the storyteller and the listener.

Fisher also asserts that the storyteller must be trustworthy. This is a vital component of narrative theory. It seems simplistic but impacts how stories will be received. Eva realized how important this trustworthiness is. "They're [stories and experiences] from people they trust. From family, you know. They've seen them for themselves. They've felt things. They've felt spirits, and they know. I think it's part of our culture...a big part. I think it's integral to our culture, these stories and spirits. Our awareness of knowing they exist."

April also understands a family's beliefs impacts the individual's beliefs. So much depends upon how a person is raised by his or her family. All of the respondents were

raised by families who believed in these stories and experiences. These stories and experiences were never treated as anything other than true or real occurrences. "I think it depends on how you're raised, and how your family raised you to believe. If you weren't raised that way, or if your family doesn't think it's true, you're probably not going to think it's true."

Margie's family also had experiences with Bakersville. It is interesting to note that most of the respondents were aware of Bakersville's dark reputation. "Our family has a house in Bakersville. Different people live in it all the time and stuff. Stuff is always happening there, and one story was about my Auntie in particular..." Margie's family strongly believes that these experiences and stories are fact.

One respondent in her sixties recalled stories she was told as a child. She still believes in these stories and experiences. She passes on these beliefs to younger generations and acquaintances that share the same culture. "...stories that we were brought up with...as we grew up. We're taught...you know...that these paranormal type things we're taught to believe. The reason I say that is because my grandma...she was probably like the last generation that witnessed actual medicine."

Embala also recalled stories told by an elderly couple. They were credible because of their age and beliefs. They were also religious people, and this added to their credibility:

Then there was this woman...a husband and wife...they lived up the road from us in the village. They were what we considered "holy roller" people. They were like really heavy into their church and prayed all the time. They said that they figured out after several occurrences that it happened between the 15th and the end of the month. They would get this knock on the door...on their back door. They're back door faces humongous hills in the village. They said at that certain time of the month they would get this knock on the door. After a while, it became such an occurrence that they expected it. There would be short grey looking people. They

said they couldn't see too far out into the dark, but as far as you could see, there were many. They would just stand...you know expressionless. They would set food. I don't know what kind of food, but apparently it took care of them. It seemed like they expected it. I know the two old folks were pretty credible...you know in their storytelling.

Theme Three and Supporting Evidence

These stories and experiences originated from tribal beliefs.

One of the research questions involved the issue of the origin of the stories. To answer this question, the researcher re-read the interviews and stories repeatedly. This is not a question that was directly asked of each respondent. The researcher had to make specific inferences from the interviews and stories. Fortunately, origin was a theme based on the codes and categories.

Some of the respondents discussed some of the historical aspects of some of the stories and experiences. Other respondents discussed their tribal beliefs, and this where most of the origins can be discovered. All of the respondents believe in these stories and experiences based on Fisher's notion of fidelity, but it is important to learn about the tribal beliefs behind these stories and experiences. It may be impossible to trace all of these stories historically, but the tribal beliefs behind these stories are invaluable.

So many stories and experiences deal with tribal beliefs and spirituality. Many respondents discussed Mandaree, and the phenomena associated with Mandaree and its inhabitants. "I know that there's a lot of stories about Mandaree School. There's so many people that have seen things around there. Usually it's like spirits. They hold a lot of funeral services there for students who have passed away there, or just people in the community..." Mandaree is home to a very large cemetery, and numerous funeral

services take place in Mandaree. Since many members of the Three Affiliated Tribes believe in spirits, Mandaree would be an origin for such stories and experiences.

Some of the respondents were asked why there is so much activity around Mandaree. "I think probably history. There were lots of battles fought there [Mandaree]. There were probably a lot of bad things that happened around Mandaree historically. I think maybe spirits are still wandering around, without any other place to go. There was so much bad stuff that happened there." Many respondents discussed Mandaree's dark history.

There were numerous battles fought near Mandaree. "There's a hill there in Mandaree that supposedly way back during the wars you know, when we were getting pushed on reservations. There was a warrior who was on his horse with probably 30 others or something. They were surrounded by 300 white soldiers..." With such a past, Mandaree would be filled with sadness and despair.

Another location that seems to have an abundance of stories is Lake Sakakawea. "I've heard from different people, they tell me that there's a lot of things around there...spirits. Because of the fact that's where everyone used to live [at the lake] up until the 1950s, and they flooded it. There's a medicine man that told me he talked to some people who lived around there..." The village was flooded, and it is now Lake Sakakawea. So, there should be a plethora of stories about the lake.

Respondents discussed numerous warnings and taboos. These taboos and warnings usually pertained to nocturnal activities. "...that went back to the day when we had to be quiet, you know. When people were getting raided, and stuff. That was a scare tactic." So, some of the stories had practical implications. They were used to instill

specific instructions that could possibly save lives. Historically, the Three Affiliated Tribes had numerous enemies. It was imperative to learn of these self-preserving tactics.

A respondent was told of the many nocturnal warnings and taboos by family and elders. She discovered why these nocturnal warnings and taboos were used:

I was always told that a lot of the stories that we believe...you're not supposed to scream at night, you're not supposed to look out the window...because a long time ago in villages they'd try and hide from the enemy. They would tell them that, so they would be quiet. That was one way they wouldn't run out in the woods.

Bakersville was discussed by many respondents. This location is mostly associated with Little People. "...A lot of people died around there, you know. A lot of bad things might have happened there, or there was a battle there..." Since many respondents believe in traditional tribal beliefs, spirits would resonate from a location like Bakersville. "There's a place here called Bakersville. It used to be a golf course, but I think they found...when they excavated they found bones. So, it's probably a burial ground."

One respondent remembered hearing stories that originated from Mandaree. Many of the stories and experiences originate from a location that has some spiritual significance:

I can't remember exactly who told me, but we've always heard these stories. There's an old hunting lodge over there, and it's still up. My dad used to go there and stay there when they went horseback riding. They would go deer hunting and used to stay there at that camp. Dad would never really tell me anything...you know, but it was other people that would. He kind of come from that area. I think it (stories) originate from out of there.

Some of the stories are used to instill respect and reverence for spirits and tribal beliefs. "I guess that was a lesson learned. If you don't know anything about something, respect it and stay away from it. My Dad always told us that we had Indian medicine,

Native American bundle. Dad had ultimate respect for it, and that's kind of what these stories are about. I think respect the unknown, the spirits." There are certain subjects that are only discussed in absolute confidence. American Indian medicine and bundles are two of these subjects. There are stories about people who do not respect these tribal beliefs.

The Badlands of western North Dakota are beautiful yet oddly sinister. They are desolate and foreboding. There are stories that originate from the Badlands:

I remember hearing stories that people lost their lives traveling in those badlands. Those roads get windy, and those cliffs are very...very steep. I've heard people, you know they drove off because of the conditions of the road. I remember one incident where a truck driver had lost his head, and they couldn't find the head of the victim. So, I remember there's stories like that. I think it's because people lost their lives there and are confused. They don't know what happened to them...

Many of the stories and experiences originate from Sundances and ceremonies. These are deeply spiritual endeavors and deserve utmost respect. "They're like the Little People, the tree witches, or the water witches. More so out toward the village. They're supposed to live out that way. Our stories about them, about spirits originate out in country at Sundances and ceremonies. Things like that..." Since there are numerous unmarked graves scattered across Fort Berthold, stories and experiences can occur out in the country.

All of the respondents believe that Bigfoot is a spirit. Many people across the United States claim to have seen this creature as well. However, Bigfoot is a tribal belief. Since the creation of the oil wells on Fort Berthold, many tribal members believe that he is a warning for this recent activity. "That Bigfoot...I wish I knew the Mandan word for it...my Grandpa said that he's a spirit. You can't catch it, and sometimes people see him. He's a spirit from long ago. Of course, I was just a young one listening when I wasn't

supposed to.” This is a fascinating belief. “I’ve heard that Bigfoot is supposed...I’ve heard a lot of things like he’s a spirit. He comes fulfilling a prophecy, or that he’s trying to warn people about something.”

Lost Bridge is a location best avoided at night. All of the respondents issued warnings about Lost Bridge. It has a dark and sinister past as well. “I heard that Hoofman lived there. I heard that under Lost Bridge somebody had been murdered. You can hear the party and hear the argument that led up to the murder.” Many stories and experiences pertain to Lost Bridge, and this has to do with the bridge’s past.

Hoofman is supposed to live on or by Lost Bridge. All of the stories about Hoofman are dark and frightening. The respondents who discuss Hoofman did so in languid tones. There are certain reasons why Hoofman lives on Lost Bridge:

Lost Bridge is over by Mandaree going toward Killdeer. The little Missouri River, that’s the river there, I think, toward the Bandlands. I guess some say it wasn’t supposed to be there. It’s by some sacred land or something. I don’t know if it was Sundance ground or some sort of burial ground. In that place it wasn’t a good place. I don’t know if it was a bad entity or if something bad happened there.

Many respondents have grown up with these stories and believe in them. Some of the respondents have even had experiences with some of the phenomena on Fort Berthold. All of these stories and experiences originated from tribal beliefs:

I guess there’s stories from the non-Indians like in different parts of the state or country or whatever. A lot of them talk of ghosts or whatever, non-Indians talk about ghosts. They use ghosts; we use spirits. We don’t use the word demon or creature or something like that. We have Hoofman, Deer Woman, things like Little People. I guess if we were to tell these things to non-Indians they would think we were crazy. From where we’re from, Fort Berthold, we know there’s Little People, and we know there’s spirits. There are certain things out there that are unexplainable, and it would be hard to explain to non-Indians. They’d think we’re crazy, but I guess the thing we have in common is the Bigfoot. Non-Indians believe in Bigfoot, and each tribe has a different name for him. Sometimes when you hear ghost stories from people, like the white people say, my house is haunted, they’ll see the resemblance on unsolved mysteries or something. I guess we would have to feed them or something. We would think one of them was

hungry. So, we would offer tobacco, or we would offer food. We would smudge off our place with sage, sweetgrass or cedar. We think of it in a different way, like someone's trying to tell us something or someone's hungry.

Theme Four and Supporting Evidence

Research participants consider these stories spiritual rather than supernatural or paranormal.

One cannot stress the importance of fidelity in Walter Fisher's narrative theory. It explains why human beings can believe in something paranormal or supernatural. Having lived on the reservation, they are all familiar with this reverence for spirituality. This shared belief in spirituality is a reason they believe in these stories and experiences.

One of the most intriguing outcomes was the discussion of Bigfoot. All of the respondents believe that Bigfoot is a spiritual being. Bigfoot is sometimes seen as a warning or the fulfillment of a prophecy. This goes against many mainstream views of Bigfoot in which he is known as the "missing link," and many cryptozoologists search for this mysterious being. Is it possible that the reason there is no physical evidence is because Bigfoot is a spirit?

Other members of the Three Affiliated Tribes believe that Big Foot is a spirit rather than a cryptozoologist's "holy grail." Jon discusses how many non-tribal members have to use empiricism to prove such a creature exists. Many American Indians believe that Big Foot is a spirit rather than a cryptid. Jon says,

I remember my grandpa telling me one time that these aren't because they all have scientific theories like these are the missing link, blah, blah, blah, but I remember my grandpa telling me he said that these are spirits and that they come around either to warn people or, like from what I gather, they're messengers for something, and I think people who are spiritual guides or whatever they understand why these come. I think they're spirits.

Margie has heard numerous stories about the Bigfoot phenomenon on Fort Berthold. Unlike mainstream views of Bigfoot, she believes that this phenomena has

more of a spiritual aspect. "I've heard that Bigfoot is supposed to, um, I've heard a lot of things like he's a spirit that he comes fulfilling a prophecy that he's trying to warn the people of something."

Some respondents even claim that Bigfoot is a spiritual reminder or omen.

According to Embala,

I remember like a couple years ago, this was when they had all the Bigfoot sightings around White Shield in particular, um, and in New Town I think they said it was around the Head Start building so people, a lot of members think that when they were having these sightings, there were a lot of deaths that occurred. You know, ordinary people die in fours back home. When one dies and three more of them will follow, they said that number almost tripled.

Susie was asked if she believes the Bigfoot observed on Fort Berthold was a spirit or physical being. "I would say both because it is like they do find different hair smells, and they never seem to find, you know, him or anything and stuff." This is a fascinating statement. Many paranormal investigators are baffled by the lack of physical evidence left by this creature. Spirits are not tangible, and their existence cannot be proven empirically.

Michael considers Bigfoot to be a spirit as well. This coincides with American Indian spirituality rather than a belief in the paranormal or supernatural. Michael describes Bigfoot,

Um, from what I've heard is that Bigfoot is really not like an animal or like a human. It is more like a spirit, and that's why they haven't never [sic] been able to catch him or find him because he can kind of come and go as he wants to.

He is aware of many stories that discuss paranormal or supernatural activity in Mandaree School. He discusses why there may be so many spirits there:

I know that is, um, there's a lot of stories about Mandaree School. There's so many people that have seen things around there, um, usually it's, like, spirits they hold, um, they hold a lot of funeral services in there for students who have passed

away there or just people in the community. I think that that might have something to do with why there's so much stuff that goes on there.

The respondents believe that locations wrought with phenomena are somehow tied to spirituality. Mandaree is associated with many funeral services and a large cemetery. Mandaree is to be avoided at night. This may have more to do with respect rather than "hauntings." Many buildings like Mandaree School are supposedly filled with paranormal or supernatural activity.

To many members of the Three Affiliated Tribes, the spirit is supposed to be cared for after it has left the body. This can be done by feeding the spirit. Many believe that one can appease the spirits by feeding them and talking to them. Mandy explains,

I think 'cause we're native people that's part of our culture is to believe in a higher power and believe that's why we take care of our people when they die. That's why we have senior pall bearers, and we take care of their spirit because we know our spirit, our soul, that's what we protect, and we know that this is just a shell, you know. And in our culture this is only temporary, and we're gonna be somewhere else. That's why we still feed our family members who've passed on. You know for a year, you know while we're mourning, they come and eat and are with us, and it's just part of our culture. That's how we were raised.

Funeral services are events that take more than one day. A senior pall bearer stays with the body until the body is placed into the ground. Friends and family are invited to sit with the body until the service. Gifts are brought and divided among friends close to the family. After the spirit has left this world, friends and family are responsible for feeding the spirit. This is a strong spiritual belief among the Three Affiliated Tribes. This deep reverence for the spiritual world is why the "paranormal" or "supernatural" events that occur on Fort Berthold are considered spiritual.

On Fort Berthold in the Bakersville area, Bernadette asserts that spiritual rather than paranormal or supernatural phenomena abound. "There's a place here called

Bakersville and it used to be a golf course, but I think they found when they excavated, they found, um, bones, so its probably a burial ground.”

There a are a plethora of supernatural or paranormal stories that deal with Four Bears Bridge and Lake Sakakawea. The elder who told this story to Bob attempted to appease the spirits by feeding them, a traditional American Indian belief. Bob explains,

I guess a lot of people have drowned in there. A lot of people have passed away. A lot of people from Fort Berthold passed away whether they be drinking or some committed suicide off the bridge. I guess that water is really... I heard of an elder who tried to feed the spirits or pray or something with the water, and I guess there was a lot of spirits or a lot of people who had passed in that lake or whatever since it was built or whatever. A lot of our people, she said, she saw a lot them, hundreds of them.

When Eva faced what she believed to be Hoofman as a child, she identified with the spiritual aspect of her experience. She did not consider what she saw as paranormal or supernatural. However, she did recognize that this entity was harmful. “I think it’s a spirit that can manifest itself in real life and take on a real physical form. It an can actually do some harm. That’s what I think.” All of the respondents who discussed Hoofman seemed to fear it for some reason. This may have to do with the location he is supposed to inhabit.

April has lived most of her life on Fort Berthold, and she was raised by a family that instilled strong beliefs in traditional American Indian customs. One’s culture and upbringing will influence beliefs and perceptions. April claims,

I think it depends on how your raised and how your family raised you to believe if your weren’t raised that way or if your family doesn’t think its true your probably wont when it comes to ceremonies and stuff like that I think that’s when a lot of it comes down to the more spiritual you are the more likely you are to believe it.

Theme Five and Supporting Evidence

Research participants consider many of these stories as warnings or taboos.

A second component of Fisher's narrative paradigm is coherence. "We judge whether the storyteller told us all of the important details so that the outcome is believable" (Wood, 2000, p. 115). American Indians are well known for their reliance on the oral tradition. Many of the respondents heard these stories from elders who are eloquent orators. These stories had to be coherent to be believable. The stories had to be clear and make sense to instill the importance of these warnings and taboos.

Since the respondents grew up with these stories, the stories and experiences resonate with their beliefs. All of the respondents are aware of many of these taboos and warnings. Respondents discussed how these warnings and taboos saved lives historically. If the enemy was hiding in the dark, it was imperative to remain silent. Screaming or eating at night would alert the enemy to the sounds and smells of the tribe's location. These warnings and taboos are still being passed on today.

Michael warns of wearing shiny objects in Lake Sakakawea. He was told of this taboo by a medicine man:

...a medicine man told me that he talked to some of the people who lived around the lake, and he said, um, for some reason don't wear like shiny things in the lake because they like those, and if you wear those in there, he said, they'll try to take you, and you could drown or something...

Michael also warns of accepting rides from strangers by Lost Bridge in Mandaree. One might see a lonely stranger on the road, but looks can be deceiving. There are numerous stories of this strange passenger. Michael explains,

I've heard stories like people pick him up. They'll see a hitchhiker, and you know, the top part he looks human for the most part, so they'll pick him up. And they'll get in his car. I heard stories of someone looked down, and they saw, you know, they saw hooves on him, or he that he got in, and he just got in for awhile, and then he just disappears.

This is an important lesson for anybody, whether they are Indian or non-Indian.

Accepting rides from strangers or offering rides from strangers can be dangerous. One only needs to look at numerous incidents of unlucky passengers or drivers who picked up the wrong person at the wrong time. Hoofman is usually a phantom, and this is a warning to those who pick him up. Those who pick him up are not likely to forget the experience.

Many of the stories Mandy was told contained warnings and taboos. Most of them warned of nocturnal dos and don'ts. She asserts,

...we grew up learning that you know close your curtains, you know, they'll be looking in at you. Spirits will be looking in at you or don't go outside with meat grease on your lips. They'll twist your mouth. They'll smell that meat, or don't whistle, they'll twist your mouth, or my grandpa used to say, if you hear somebody say your name...you know... and you're by yourself, don't ever look at them. Don't ever turn around and look at them, or your hair will turn white. You know stuff like that. What it came down to is being respectful and not, you know, making a bunch of noise at night. I don't know if that went back to the day when we had to be quiet, you know, when people were getting raided, you know, and stuff if that was a scare tactic...

Many of the stories told to Bernadette served as cultural warnings or taboos. "My grandma would say don't peek out at night, there's spirits out there, or kids don't eat food outside when it's dark cause those spirits will twist your mouth. You know stuff like that." This may go back to a time when such activities could be dangerous. Having one's mouth twisted is a good incentive not to do something.

Many old roads and infrastructure located on Fort Berthold have been redone or even closed. One such road led to a popular party spot for young people on the

reservation. Eventually, strange phenomena scared numerous party goers away.

According to Jon,

They closed that road off now. No one goes down there no more [sic]. It's not even considered an option to even go and even party anymore. Just too many strange things were happening over the years. I think the community and the people my age started realizing like, hey, maybe there's a message here...

Bob was also raised to believe in certain taboos. He was told stories about those who chose to ignore warnings and the repercussions of such actions. These taboos are apparent in the stories he tells and the experiences he has endured. Bob explains these taboos:

I was told you're not supposed to scream or holler or whatever because you're calling the spirits. You're not supposed to be out at night, you're not supposed to look outside the window when it's nighttime. Another thing you're not supposed to do is when you're out in the country... I guess there were dogs at the house, and they would scream, and the dogs would holler, and you're not supposed to let them do that. One thing is, you're not supposed to provoke.

When Eva recalled her experience with Hoofman, she recalled a particular taboo. "I know that I'm not supposed to look behind me at night, but you know you're a little kid so you're curious." This coincides with several nocturnal taboos respondents identified through experiences and the stories they were told. It seems as if the punishment for violating any tribal taboo is severe. One may see Hoofman or get his or her mouth twisted. These are harsh penalties for violating these taboos.

As a child, April was warned of several nocturnal taboos and customs. She often wondered why her relatives and friends insisted that she adhere to their warnings. April learned that there is a reason that these taboos were instilled in young ones historically.

According to April,

I don't know. I was always told that a lot of the stories that we believe—you're not supposed to scream at night, you're not supposed to look out the window because like a long time ago in villages like they'd try and hide from the enemy, they would tell them that so they would be quiet. Maybe that was one too so they wouldn't run out in the woods.

Many elders warn of provoking spirits or spiritual places. However, young adventurers like Margie tend to push the boundaries of belief and tradition. Margie's harrowing experience occurred because she did not know what pushing such spiritual boundaries can do. "We used to go to Mandaree sometimes and, um...we used to go [to] Lost Bridge before we knew any better." Margie is now aware of such places, and she has a new-found respect for the unknown.

A common theme in many of the stories and experiences told by tribal members is that of the repercussions of violating a taboo. Children are especially targeted by spiteful spirits or entities. Embala says,

I remember them telling us never to go back in those hills and whatever. They gave several accounts of how a certain person as a kid misbehaved and raised heck or whatever and they were somehow...they felt like they were somehow affected by those women.

When asked about Lost Bridge in Mandaree, Susie was apprehensive to discuss it. She was also apprehensive to discuss the Little People or anything spiritual. Her answers were short along with her stories. Susie was asked if she spent a lot of time in that area. "No. Just traveling. Never at night. We tried to avoid at night." It is very apparent that this location is a place to be avoided at night and respected.

Summary

In Chapter I an explanation for the selected stories and experiences was provided. This chapter also provided a brief discussion of the terms "paranormal" and

“supernatural,” and why they were chosen. The chapter concluded with the purpose, need, and significance of this study.

Chapter II was a comprehensive literature review. Three interrelated concepts were vital to this study. These interrelated concepts were the American Indian oral tradition, narrative theory, and paranormal beliefs.

Chapter III contained the rationale as to why the researcher chose narrative qualitative interviewing. Next, there was a discussion about participant selection and participant profiles. Data analysis concluded the chapter.

In Chapter IV the contemporary stories of the paranormal or supernatural as told by members of the Three Affiliated Tribes was presented. Chapter V was an overview of the findings of the study. Five subsequent themes emerged with evidence in the form of quotations from the ten participants. Chapter VI contains conclusions, a discussion of the study, and recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND DISCUSSION

Chapter VI is comprised of an overview of the study. Each of the five research questions is addressed. The data analysis offered insights into the researcher's initial research questions. Next, an overview of the themes is offered as a way to juxtapose the findings. Walter Fisher's narrative theory is discussed in the findings of this study. A brief discussion situates the research findings in the literature. Finally, the researcher suggests recommendations for future research.

Research Questions

Research Question 1

Where did these contemporary stories of the paranormal or supernatural originate?

This question involved the issue of origins, and to answer it, the researcher re-read the interviews and stories. This was not a question directly asked of each respondent. The researcher made inferences from each of the interviews and stories.

Some of the respondents discussed historical aspects of the stories and experiences. In the past, nocturnal taboos safeguarded against enemy attacks. Screaming at night or eating at night could alert the enemy to the tribe's location. Other respondents discussed tribal beliefs, and this is where most of the origins reside. All of the respondents believe in these stories and experiences, which echoes Fisher's notion of fidelity, but it is important in and of itself to learn about the tribal beliefs undergirding

these stories and experiences. While it may be impossible to trace all of these stories historically, the tribal beliefs uncovered behind the stories are invaluable.

Some of the beliefs that influenced these stories and experiences are spirituality, ceremonies, and locations. All of the respondents discussed their deep reverence and respect for spirits. In fact, it is a tribal belief that Bigfoot is a spirit rather than a primeval human. Many of the stories and experiences occur around sacred land or ceremonies, one of which is the sweat lodge. The locations the respondents talked about have some link to sacred ground or spirituality.

Research Question 2

What is the meaning behind these stories?

Some stories serve as warnings or cultural taboos. Children were advised not to perform certain activities at night. Many of the respondents referred to these warnings in their interviews, especially when these taboos and warnings are violated. For example, one must never scream or provoke the spirits at night. Several respondents still abide by these warnings. Historically, Plains American Indians had to be stealthy and cautious at night. These stories of warnings and taboos probably served as teaching aids.

All of the stories contain aspects of tribal customs and beliefs for which the respondents have a strong respect. These stories serve as a means of enculturation, that is, promoting and instilling customs, beliefs, and traditions. One respondent discussed how she grew up hearing these stories, and now she is going to tell her grandchildren these stories. They contain valuable lessons about her culture, which is vital for her to pass on to future generations.

Many of the experiences reveal certain aspects of spirituality and tribal beliefs. The respondents who experienced something paranormal or supernatural on Fort Berthold attribute these experiences to their customs and spirituality. For example, respondents knew that “smudging” was one way to cleanse or appease restless spirits. The individual experiences resonated with the respondents’ values, beliefs, and customs.

Research Question 3

How are these stories different from other stories of the paranormal or supernatural?

Respondents believed that these stories and experiences are spiritual in nature. While the mainstream populace deem paranormal or supernatural phenomena as something to be explored, discovered, or perhaps even studied, American Indians view these phenomena as spiritual. That is all the validation they need to believe in such “fantastic” phenomena. The respondents did not refer to the creatures as cryptids or the entities as ghosts. They truly believed that all of these beings are spirits.

The respondents also referred to their cultural traditions and beliefs. These stories and experiences of the paranormal or supernatural are wrought with customs, beliefs, and traditions of the Mandan, Hidatsa, and Arikara. This stands in contrast with mainstream stories of the paranormal or supernatural. The stories and experiences gave invaluable insights into life on the reservation. In fact, some stories could not be shared due to the sacred nature of the ceremonies and locations involved.

The respondents explained that they believed in these stories because their families and elders told them these stories are true. Fisher argues that listeners will evaluate the storyteller’s yarn based on fidelity and coherence. If the story resonates with

the listener's culture, it will be more believable. The storyteller's credibility is also indicative of whether the listener will believe in these stories. Family members and elders were highly believable. The participants believed the stories, in part, based on their relational ties to the storyteller. The stories and experiences made sense to the respondents because the stories adhere to tribal traditions.

Research Question 4

Do the respondents "believe" in these stories of the paranormal or supernatural?

Fisher asserts that human beings are storytellers by nature, and humans believe stories based on cultural considerations. The respondents were raised in traditional American Indian households, and these paranormal or supernatural phenomena were treated as everyday occurrences.

All of the respondents were asked directly if they believe in these stories and experiences, and all responded affirmatively. They were also asked if all tribal members believe in these stories. The responses varied, but most of the respondents think members who live on the reservation do believe. However, those tribal members that do not live on the reservation or younger generations may not believe.

Research Question 5

Do these stories connect to traditional American Indian customs and beliefs?

All of these stories and experiences of the paranormal or supernatural coincide with the respondents' traditional customs and beliefs. Spirituality is very important to many American Indians. Respondents discussed many aspects of spirituality. Nocturnal activities should be limited, because "the night is for the spirits." What many would call

strange creatures or ghosts, the respondents call "spirits." The respondents revere and respect the spirits in any form.

The respondents discussed these aspects of culture in a "matter of fact" way. They could assume that the researcher was familiar with all of the tribal beliefs and customs because the researcher is also a member of the Three Affiliated Tribes. The other reason may be that these customs and beliefs are embedded and reaffirmed in everyday life. One respondent took the time to explain some of these tribal customs and beliefs. However, many customs such as the Sundance are sacred and cannot be discussed.

Overview of Themes

Theme one: Research participants believe in these stories and experiences because of their values, traditions, and language.

It is evident that the respondents have close ties to their tribal values, traditions, and language. Research participants identified numerous objects and activities that signified their strong sense of their culture. Such activities included "smudging," Sundances, and sweat lodges. Other respondents discussed some of the traditional words for Little People and Bigfoot.

Members of the Three Affiliated Tribes have a unique culture developed over the centuries. It is important to remember that Fort Berthold comprises three different tribes: the Mandan, Hidatsa, and Arikara. Each of the individual tribes have its own values, traditions, and language. However, many members of the Three Affiliated Tribes belong to one, two, or all three of these tribes. For example, Bernadette is a member of the Mandan and Hidatsa tribes.

Fisher asserts that listeners will believe in stories if the stories resonate with their values, traditions, and language (1978, 1984, 1987). Some respondents admitted that non-

tribal members would probably think they were “crazy” if they heard these stories and accounts. These stories and experiences may seem illogical and fantastic, but the respondents believe in them.

Theme two: Research participants believe in the stories and experiences because they come from family and elders.

This theme was particularly strong in the interviews and subsequent stories. Respondents identified numerous extended family members and elders. Their strong familial ties were an important factor in their belief systems. They believed in these stories and experiences because they emanated from the nexus of family and elders. Along with culture, family and elders were equally as important in solidifying the respondents’ beliefs in these stories of the paranormal or supernatural.

Another aspect of Fisher’s narrative theory is the importance of the storyteller. Credibility can be determined by many things, but family and trusted friends are perhaps the most trustworthy. This is particularly true with many American Indian tribes. The researcher found that reverence for families and friends was a crucial factor in why the research participants believe in these stories and experiences.

Theme Three: These stories and experiences originated from tribal beliefs.

One of the research questions involved the issue of origin. To answer this question, the researcher re-read the interviews and stories many times. Because this was not a question that was directly asked of each respondent, the researcher had to make specific inferences from the interviews and stories.

Some of the respondents discussed historical aspects of some of the stories and experiences. In the past, nocturnal activities at night were to be avoided. These activities

would alert the enemy to the tribe's location. Other respondents discussed their tribal beliefs, and this is where most of the origins can be discovered.

Many stories and experiences deal with tribal beliefs and spirituality. Many respondents discuss Mandaree and the phenomena associated with Mandaree and its inhabitants. "I know that there's a lot of stories about Mandaree School. There's so many people that have seen things around there. Usually it's like spirits. They hold a lot of funeral services there for students who have passed away there, or just people in the community..." Mandaree is home to a very large cemetery, and numerous funeral services take place in Mandaree. Since many members of the Three Affiliated Tribes believe in spirits, Mandaree would be an origin for such stories and experiences.

Theme four: Research participants consider these stories spiritual rather than supernatural or paranormal.

The respondents did not use the terms "paranormal" or "supernatural" to explain their experiences. Their experiences and stories were more spiritual rather than "scary" or "paranormal."

Bigfoot has been seen by native and non-native bystanders for years. In fact, there is supposed to be video footage of such a beast. However, many of the respondents offer a fascinating perspective on this issue. They identify Bigfoot as a spirit rather than an actual being. Some respondents had unexplained experiences, but the respondents identified their experiences and stories as spiritual. Respondents discussed the significance of growing up with the culture, and such activities like "feeding the spirits" is commonplace.

Theme five: Research participants consider many of these stories as warnings or taboos.

These stories and experiences serve as warnings and reinforce cultural taboos.

Many of the respondents remember hearing of these warnings and taboos as children. All of them are still aware of the repercussions of violating these warnings or taboos.

Perhaps not surprisingly, most of the respondents identified nocturnal taboos.

These taboos included screaming at night and looking out windows. The penalty for such violations included a twisted mouth. Some respondents think that these were enforced historically to stress the importance of staying silent at night as not to alert the enemy. The remaining taboos included not wearing shiny objects in the lake, looking behind oneself at night, partying in spiritual locations, provoking spirits, and the disrespect of misbehaving children.

Discussion

As a proud member of the Three Affiliated Tribes, I have made it my prerogative to preserve as much of the heritage as I can. I spent many years in Fort Berthold growing up though I did not spend all of my life there, I remember hearing stories about Bigfoot, Hoofman, Little People, and various locations on Fort Berthold. I fell in love with mystery and intrigue of each story. I have always aspired to collect these stories for my relatives and descendants.

It has been difficult to hold on to my cultural heritage. My father worked for the government, and we moved as a family a lot. I lived in Alaska, Utah, Wyoming, and North Dakota as a child. We always lived on the reservations where my father was stationed. My stepmother is white, and this caused a lot of friction during my

adolescence. My stepmother's skin color may not have been an issue if my father had not been the superintendent of reservations of which he was not a member.

As a child, I remember enrolling in bilingual classes in Utah. My favorite pastime was reading about the traditional stories of the Navajo, Hopi, and Ute. I found a children's storybook at that time that literally changed my life. The book contained paranormal or supernatural stories from various tribes across the United States. My favorite story was about a Basket Lady that haunts the Grand Canyon for children to place in her basket and eat later.

Listening to stories of the paranormal and supernatural became a hobby of mine from then on. I ambitiously read books about the paranormal and supernatural. I also listened to stories anyone would tell me, in particular stories from American Indians. I always found stories from American Indians more poignant and convincing. This may be due to the importance of storytelling in American Indian cultures. There were many nights I woke up in the middle of the night screaming from nightmares about the stories I was told. However, I would always try to solicit just one more story from my relatives and friends.

All of my grandparents have passed away, and this a tragedy of lost memories. I wish I had asked them to tell me these types of stories, but I was always preoccupied with my toys and cousins. I am grateful that my grandparents trusted these stories to my relatives and close personal contacts. My family was always close knit until my grandparents passed away. Now, it is difficult to find time for extended family, which is also a loss.

Three issues are of utmost importance when discussing the American Indian oral tradition. These issues include cultural considerations of specific tribes, translation of the spoken word into the written word, and the relationship between the recorder and the storyteller. These issues were paramount in my quest to learn more about Fort Berthold's stories of the paranormal or supernatural. The literature review was an important tool in my study. It kept me grounded and reminded me of the scholarly conversation about these issues.

Some of the cultural considerations I encountered included the use of specific words and the discussion of sacred practices. The respondents were aware that the American Indian term for Little People is sacred, but some respondents shared this term with me. Out of respect for the members of the Three Affiliated Tribes, I did not reveal the term here. Other respondents were reluctant to share specific details about ceremonies like the Sundance. I constantly reminded myself that these are all cultural considerations about which I needed to be sensitive.

According to Huntsman, "the problems confronting the translator [and reader] of Native American literature are immense" (Huntsman, p.96, 1983). It was difficult to transcribe these stories and experiences into somewhat coherent "readable" narratives. I did my best to preserve as much of the story as I could, but much was lost. These stories were meant to be told orally, and future research in this area should attempt to remedy this. Perhaps, storytellers can be video recorded in order to capture nuances and nonverbal communication.

As a native recorder, I certainly had advantages over a non-native recorder. At times, I took for granted that listeners would know what I was discussing. Since I am

familiar with the culture, I was unaware that the practices and beliefs may be foreign to non-tribal members. For example, I know what "smudging" means. The respondents did not elaborate on smudging practices, and I did not explain what "smudging" was in my own work until later drafts of my discussion. Another problem was consistently placing myself in the role of researcher as opposed to tribal member or American Indian.

I believe this study demonstrates how Walter Fisher's narrative theory functions, and it proves the validity of his theory. Non-tribal members consider these stories and experiences as "paranormal" or "supernatural." The respondents, through direct questioning, believe in these stories and experiences.

Fisher asserted that storytelling is the most persuasive communicative device in a rhetorician's arsenal (1987.) He originally studied Regan's speeches but eventually devoted his research to narrative theory which he revised with the narrative paradigm. This theory was instrumental in explaining why these members of the Three Affiliated Tribe believe in these stories of the paranormal or supernatural.

They believed because the stories resonated with their culture. Fisher made the claim that stories are accepted and deemed believable if they coincide with the listener's values, beliefs, and traditions. All of the respondents discussed that these stories were told by family members and elders. These storytellers were credible based on the relational dimension, and thus deemed believable. American Indians value family and extended family, often in contrast with the typical American household. Cousins are viewed like brothers and sisters, and uncles and aunts are like mothers and fathers. This emphasis on family was instrumental in understanding how "rational" people would believe in what most people would consider "irrational."

Another aspect of Fisher's narrative theory involves the notion of "good reasons." Something that would seem illogical like the existence of Little People or Bigfoot could be logical based on "good reasons." These "good reasons" included tribal beliefs, customs, traditions, and the credibility of the storytellers. So, this study reinforces the importance of storytelling. I want to continue my exploration of American Indian stories of the paranormal and supernatural, and I will continue to utilize Fisher's basic tenets.

At the heart of the issue of paranormal or supernatural belief systems is a question. Is intellectual reasoning or logic capable of fathoming the paranormal or supernatural (Puhle & Parker, 2004)? Walter Fisher would argue that logical people could believe in the supernatural or paranormal based on "good reasons." All of the respondents in this study are professionals or students who believe in the paranormal or supernatural. These stories and experiences resonate with the respondents' culture, and they come from elders and family members. These are indeed "good reasons" to believe.

It could be argued by those who do not believe in paranormal or supernatural experiences that psychological reasons can be used to explain these stories and experiences. Much of the research into paranormal belief is driven by what has been deemed deprivation theory. This particular theory asserts that paranormal beliefs provide people with the means to cope with the strain of being socially and economically disadvantaged (Clock & Stark, 1965; Stark & Bainbridge, 1980). "Thus, belief in the paranormal should be higher among marginal social groups, such as minorities and the poor" (Rice, 2003, p.2).

Many American Indian reservations are wrought with poverty and alcoholism. It could be argued that American Indians use these stories and experiences as a coping

mechanism. However, the respondents in this study discussed the dangers of drinking alcohol and using drugs. They are also professionals or students on their way to careers. So, it could be argued that this study does not reflect deprivation theory. American Indian stories and experiences of the paranormal or supernatural would be excellent venues to test deprivation theory, but researchers would have to tread lightly. Many respondents would not be eager to dismiss their tribal beliefs for the sake of psychological certainties.

These stories also reveal similarities to paranormal or supernatural phenomena across the world as noted by McClennon (2004). Many American Indian tribes believe in Bigfoot and Little People. These phenomena are not limited to American Indian tribes, however. Other cultures believe in Little People, and the similarities are astonishing. This would make a fascinating study as well. I would love to partake in a global study like this. Hopefully, I will have the opportunity to pursue this and other interests in the future.

Recommendations for Future Research

This particular study led to some surprising results and conclusions; however, this study can and will be expanded in the future. A plethora of stories were collected, and themes emerged out of the ten interviews. The following recommendations for future research are guidelines for the researcher and other interested parties.

1. More stories of the paranormal or supernatural as told by members of the Three Affiliated Tribes could be collected.
2. Focus groups could be used to create a snowballing effect amongst the respondents.
3. A well-conducted ethnography would enhance this type of study.

4. A comparison of different North Dakota tribes' stories of the paranormal or supernatural would be fruitful.
5. Researchers could compare and contrast different tribes' stories of the paranormal or supernatural across the United States. For example, a researcher could study stories from a Plains tribe, a Southwestern tribe, and a northern tribe.
6. An ambitious study would involve comparing the stories of indigenous peoples across the globe.
7. Researchers could compare and contrast historical and contemporary American Indian stories of the paranormal.
8. A study of nonverbal components of American Indian Oral Tradition is needed.
9. An exploration of the mentoring relationships between storytellers and their audiences is needed.
10. Walter Fisher's narrative theory could be applied to historical American Indian stories.

Final Thoughts

The respondents are personal contacts I have met through the years. It was difficult to locate respondents who did not know my family or me. However, I am grateful that the respondents were comfortable enough to share their experiences and stories with me. I let them choose their own names, because I did not want them to be easily recognizable. I wondered if I had enough respondents for proper data analysis. I was pleasantly surprised by the abundance of data I received. I was able to collect the fascinating stories I was told, and I thirst for more.

I am eternally grateful to the respondents for sharing their experiences and stories with me. I know they trusted me with the very essence of their traditions, values, and beliefs. I look forward to working with more respondents in the future. It is my goal to take this particular study and expand it. I want to preserve these stories for tribal and non-tribal members alike.

APPENDICES

Appendix A Consent Form

Narrative theory and Fort Berthold's Stories of the Paranormal or Supernatural

You are invited to participate in a research study being conducted by Waylon Baker of the University of North Dakota's School of Communication under the supervision of his advisor, Dr. Pamela Kalbfleisch of the School of Communication.

This study will help provide insight into Fort Berthold's contemporary stories of the paranormal like the "Little People, Bigfoot, and Hoofman." The interview will last approximately one to two hours. You will meet with an interviewer and answer open ended questions. During this time, you will have an informal conversation with an interviewer, who will ask you to share any stories you may have heard or any of your personal experiences. The interviews will be audio taped, and the interviewer will take notes. The interviewer plans to transcribe the interviews with the help of his advisor, Pamela Kalbfleisch.

The only risk to you of participating in this research is that you may experience some emotional discomfort. However, this risk will be minimized by maintaining strict confidentiality. Although there will not be any direct benefits to you other than the satisfaction of knowing that you helped with this important study, some of the broader benefits of this study include a greater understanding of the rich contemporary oral tradition of the members of the Three Affiliated Tribes.

Any information from this study that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission. You are guaranteed total anonymity, because the interviewer will refrain from asking identifying information like your real name or address.

All audio tapes, notes, and consent forms will be kept in separate locked cabinets for a minimum of 3 years after the completion of this study. Only the researcher, the advisor, and people who audit IRB procedures will have access to the data. After 3 years, the data will be shredded and the tapes erased.

Participation is voluntary, and your decision whether or not to participate will not change your future relations with the researchers or the School of Communication. If you decide not to participate, you are free to leave the study at any time without penalty.

If you have any questions about the research, you may call Waylon Baker at 218-779-6965 or Pamela Kalbfleisch at 701-777-6369. If you have any other questions or concerns, please call the Research Development and Compliance office at 701-777-4279.

You will be given a copy of this consent form for future reference.

All of my questions have been answered, and I am encouraged to ask any questions that I may have concerning this study in the future.

Participant's signature

Date

Appendix B

Interview Questions

The following open-ended questions were used in the study.

1. What name may I call you?
2. Your age?
3. What is your tribal affiliation?
4. Do you live on or off the reservation?
 - a. How much time have you spent on the reservation?
5. What is your occupation?
6. Have you ever heard any paranormal or supernatural stories about the reservation or about the people who live on the reservation now?
7. Have you ever experienced anything paranormal or supernatural on the reservation?
8. Please share any stories or experiences of the supernatural or paranormal kind that you have heard or experienced that deal with Fort Berthold. In particular, can you tell me anything about Bigfoot, Hoofman, the Little People, or any places that are known to be supernatural or paranormal?
9. How are these stories/experiences different from similar stories/experiences of non-tribal members?
10. Do you think that most members of the Three Affiliated Tribes believe in these stories?

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